Shepherds

FEBRUARY, 1956

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For Commission on Membership and Evangelism in the Local Church

February, 1956

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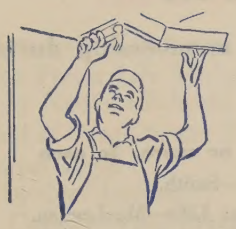

I would choose for my Lenten reading Roy L. Smith's book YOU ARE IMPORTANT. These 56 little lessons in spiritual efficiency are probing searchlights thrown on personal problems, revealing the depths of human misunderstanding of and disregard for the laws governing our spiritual lives. These lessons dynamically teach how these laws, if recognized and obeyed, can but inevitably result in a closer fellowship with our Father and lead to a more abundant life.—*ex-schoolteacher.*
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Regardless of my need, I can always find a prayer to meet that need in the book of prayers, ALONE WITH GOD written by Dr. Grover C. Emmons, founder and first editor of THE UPPER ROOM. This little volume inspires, uplifts and challenges one to a closer walk with God—for Lent and the year around.—*receptionist.*
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My book for Lenten reading is THE DEVOUT LIFE as arranged and edited by Thomas Kepler. Containing choice inspirational selections from three great devotional classics, this book finds me where I am, and creates in me the longing to live nearer to the heart of God. I am confident this book will make Lent more meaningful to me and strengthen me in faith.—*an editor.*
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A book that I would use during Lent, that I might be a more worthy child of God to greet the Easter morning, is the recently published SIX 20TH CENTURY MYSTICS, by G. Ernest Thomas. Upon reading this slim volume of the lives and spiritual practices of six men of our century—Rufus Jones, Albert Schweitzer, Glenn Clark, Peter Marshall, Frank G. Laubach, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer—I am of a mind that I too might hear God's voice speaking intimately and find an inner radiance which will change my life and thus change life for those around me.—*housewife.*
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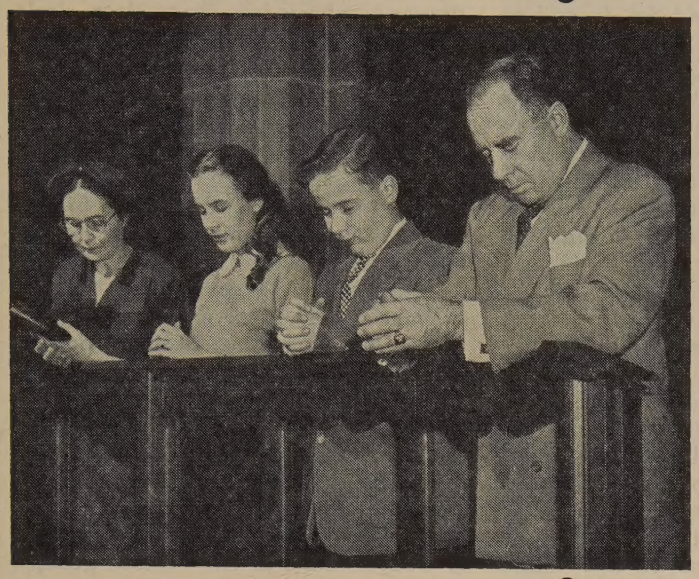

The Prayer Life Movement

by

Newton Edward Moats

Pastor, Grace Methodist Church

Des Moines, Iowa

WHEN we talk about the organization of a Prayer Life Movement, the first reaction is apt to be "What? Another movement?" When we suggest a Prayer Chain, a few wise critics may say, "Our trouble now is that we are already in chains, unending chains of activity." This need not be so.

All of us who serve in the local churches are busy—sometimes too busy. When some new movement is suggested, we are inclined to be skeptical and critical.

A few years ago, when we were seeking to revitalize the "Holy Habits" of our people, I attended a District conference of ministers. After the meeting was over I heard all sorts of comments about "more meetings and more card-signing." Nevertheless, it was a successful venture. We were not overwhelmed, nor discouraged by the negative comments. We knew that the criticism was coming from a few busy preachers, who did not want their crowded programs further encumbered. They talked about "handed down" programs and resisted them in self-defense.

These busy pastors were not opposed to "Holy Habits." They did not deny that there was a need for an enriched prayer life and for more work of evangelism among their people. Consciously or unconsciously, however, they did resist any movement designed to bring these things to pass. They felt that their Church already had too much machinery, too many wheels moving.

Great Objectives

But we do need to lift up the greatest objectives of our faith, to put first things first. We need not merely more movements, but more moving of the spirit within the life of our churches. We need to encourage more attention to our "Holy Habits," more concern for the discouraged, the broken, the lost. We need to make a more vital contact for our people with their source of renewal and power. A real prayer life movement should help us keep these objectives central in all our activities.

Nels Ferré suggests that prayer is like telephoning. Our prayers are person-to-person talks. How true this is. There must be an agency, however, to help us make our connections.

The task of our Board of Evangelism is to furnish transmitters. Our chosen leaders maintain a network of service media to help us make our contacts. We need this implementation. Of course, this network is only the means; it is not the end objective. We seek to create and to maintain good communication lines, but this is not our primary responsibility. The value of our labor depends upon this question: "Is God using our transmitters?"

A Clear Channel

Our first task is to make sure that we, ourselves, have good connections, a clear channel. God is standing by. If He is not speaking to us and through us, the failure is ours. May His message be our message, because we take time to listen for His voice.

Prayer is, for the most part, listening. We cannot take it for granted that every church will be a praying church any more than we can assume that every church will be a soul-winning

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church. So in Methodism we create a great connectional system. Call it mechanics, if you will. It is that, but it is something more than that. As the telephone and the broadcast depend on electrical impulses, so our connectional system depends on divine impulses.

The General Board of Evangelism, the Conference Committees on Evangelism and the Commissions of Evangelism in the local church are part of God's light and power system furnishing the connections for a praying and evangelizing Church. Do I dare to hope—indeed, to expect—that each of us will become in our Conferences and churches not linemen but "live-wires," carrying God's message to His people?

The Prayer Life Movement can help maintain these transmission lines, keeping them alive with light and power. One way we can keep our connections alive is to organize prayer cells.

What is a "cell"? It is where two or three persons—or four or five—come together in God's name. The number is not important. The members of the cell seek commitment to the will of their Lord, completely and without reservation. They put their thoughts into words, of course; but what is more important, they seek to make contact with their Lord. They listen, they wait, they drive every desire of their own out to the rim of their consciousness, out to that place where the seen meets the unseen, where man and his Maker become as one in Christ Jesus.

Do we believe in this kind of group praying? Is it possible that it might recapture for us the intimate fellowship that we lost when the old-fashioned prayer meeting vanished?

Of Vital Importance

The forming of prayer cells must come about naturally. Any artificial neans of bringing groups together for such a purpose would be immediately superficial. Nevertheless, it is vitally important that there should be many small groups in our churches coming together at regular intervals to seek for reality in their experience of God.

How can these things come to pass naturally and effectively? We discovered at Grace Church that prayer cells can be the by-product of a Prayer Life Mission. When we started our preparation for such a mission last fall, we found that there were some 60 meetings, parties, and programs scheduled for the month of December. These did not include Sunday programs and activities. To plan more meetings during this holiday season would have been little short of disastrous. Yet, we wanted a Christmas Prayer Life Mission. We were joining with the crusade to "Keep Christ in Christmas."

So we decided not to set up more meetings but to carry the Christmas prayer emphasis into every class, circle, and party, into the Guild, the drama group, and the church program.

Four ministers visited these groups at their regular meeting times. They did not *talk* about prayer. They were not sermonizing. Rather, they were asking each group—the choirs, the Fishermen's Club, the Sunday school classes, the Woman's Society of Christian Service, and others to share with them in a Yuletide adventure aimed at keeping Christ in Christmas through prayer. They were conducting prayer meetings. This year, when we repeat the Christmas Prayer Life Mission, we will enlist the help of a number of qualified laymen and lay women.

After our mission was over, it was not difficult to encourage the forming of Prayer Cells in the various groups, circles, and classes for the sake of keeping Christ at the center of their activities throughout the coming year. During the Lenten season a few weeks later, these Prayer Cells became the nucleus for our program of evangelism. They were the "leaven of the lump" in their own organizations for our visitation evangelism.

Deeper Motivation

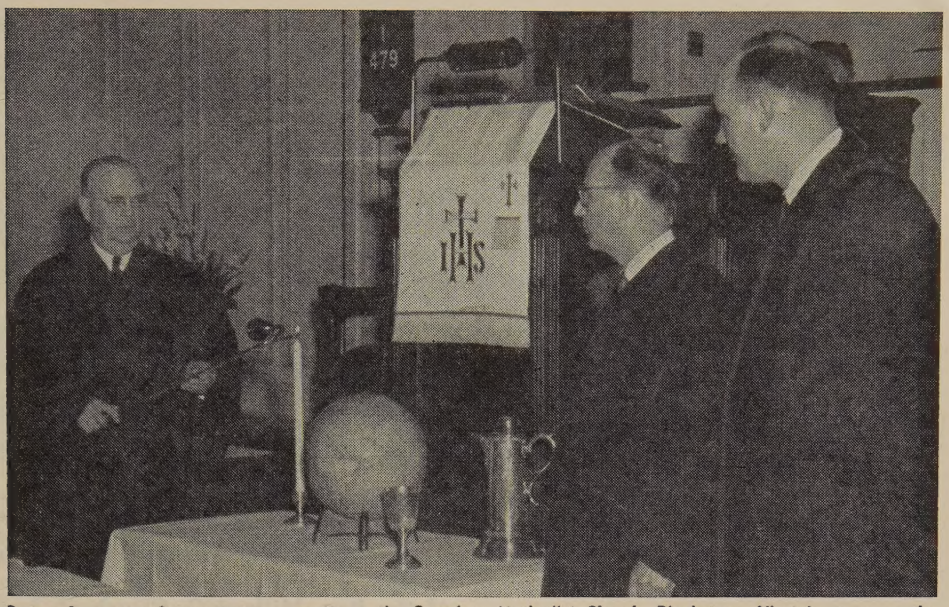
This method of developing a Prayer Life Movement in a local church is natural, not forced, nor artificial. It does not create new machinery but seeks to revitalize and deepen the motivations of the groups already working. It helps to put prayer at the heart of every program in the church.

Prayer chains, prayer cells, and a prayer mission can start the fire burning again upon our altars. Our methods and procedures may need overhauling from time to time, but let us give the Prayer Life Movement every opportunity to succeed. It is needed.

There is every indication that our churches are ready for a Prayer Life emphasis. The progress made during the last year is most encouraging of our Prayer Life Movement. Thirteen hundred churches have joined in the 24-hour Prayer Vigils. Every state in the Union is represented in these chains of continuous prayer.

Is it possible that modern Christianity is ready and hungry for another prayer revival similar to the one back in 1857? One hundred years later, should we have the courage to believe that a shaken world is ready for another prayer revival?

God at Work



Bishop Paul Nett Garber lights a candle at the Crenshaw Methodist Church, Blackstone, Virginia, to open the full year's program of "Prayer Vigils" now under way throughout Virginia. The lighted candle by the globe, picturing the world in darkness and sin, symbolizes what will happen when enough Christians pray sufficiently for a more Christian world. Looking on are H. Conrad Blackwell, Superintendent, Farmville District, and J. W. Mast, pastor.

IN THE PRAYER LIFE MOVEMENT

The Prayer Life Movement is a life-changing spiritual movement reaching every section of America and helping thousands of persons.

The intelligent concepts of prayer revealed in the Bible and in the finest books on prayer are being read and studied by prayer groups in many communities.

The genius of this Prayer Movement is found in the dynamic experience of a small prayer unit finding new life in Christ through prayer and importing that life to other persons and thus starting new life in prayer and new prayer groups.

There are no memberships in the Prayer Life Movement, except as a praying people are a part of a prayer cell, prayer group, or a prayer fellowship.

The Prayer Life Movement seeks to undergird the total spiritual program of the local church and thus strengthen Methodism.

This is a grass roots movement initiated by the Holy Spirit and involving people from all walks of life as well as churches in city, country, and town across America.

A Tremendous Challenge

FROM far off Formosa came a letter from Madame Chiang Kai-shek to Mrs. J. K. Tate, Minter City, Mississippi, "Thank you very much for your letter of June 22nd, enclosing the names of the members of your prayer group who are praying for our prayer groups. I read your letter aloud at one of our meetings—everyone was much moved and we prayed as a group that day for your group." Madame Chiang further added, "At the next meeting a copy of the list of the names of those praying for us was given to each member to pray daily and individually for her opposite 'number.' "

From this island fortress of freedom on the other side of the world to the hearts of these prayer groups in the Mississippi Delta reaches the golden chain of prayer!

The little church at Minter City, under the leadership of the Rev. J. W. Chatham, has asked for the names of ten thousand people to pray for!

There are thousands of prayer cells and prayer groups in America and around the earth that are forming a chain of faith and hope for mankind.

A picture and a paragraph in *Life* Magazine in January, 1955, told millions of people that Methodists were having a year of continuous prayer. More than 1,300 churches have volunteered to have 24-hour prayer vigils. In 1956 there will be thousands of churches in the state-wide or Conference-wide prayer vigils.

In Missouri three Conferences unite to have 12 months of continuous prayer in their state under the leadership of Bishop Ivan Lee Holt. Similar prayer movements are under way in Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Illinois, Virginia, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, and other states.

Bishop John Wesley Lord brought a tremendous challenge to the New England Conference through his message on "Prayer and Collective Action."

Every state in the union has been represented in the Prayer Life Movement.

From Matewan, West Virginia, comes the testimony of the Rev. Carl Looney: "Not for a moment do you doubt the leadership of the Holy Spirit in this great Prayer Life Movement across Methodism. I have seen more accomplished in transforming the life of a cold, indifferent church in a twenty-four hour prayer vigil than I used to see in ten days of preaching and singing. It seems that God has put into our hands a piece of spiritual power-equipment such as we never dreamed possible for these difficult days."

Rev. Looney shared further about the prayer vigil at Emory and Henry College, "The memorable prayers that were offered by President Gibson, Dean Armbrister, faculty members, and students cannot soon be forgotten. Three young men surrendered to the call to preach, and about 60 confessions and rededications were counted."

Following his prayer vigil at Mount Pleasant Boulevard Church in Roanoke, Virginia, the Rev. Ernest Cochran found it necessary to bring in chairs to hold the large morning congregation! The pastor states, "We are expecting to see the results of the Prayer Vigil reflected in all of our church activities."

From down in Douglas, Georgia, comes the story of the Rev. Frank Robertson, new pastor at Columbus, Georgia, and a prayer cell that met at 5:00 o'clock on Wednesday morning.

The Rev. Paul A. Shepherd of Clinton, Indiana, says, "Many are asking

if they can have prayer groups meeting regularly."

In a San Antonio church thirty youth participated in a prayer vigil. There were 12 Latin Americans and one Negro among the adults. Forty-two members of the Official Board were among those who prayed. The Rev. A. E. Rector, more than 99 years of age, kept the prayer watch between 6:00 A.M. and 7:00 A.M.

From Rapid City, South Dakota, comes this radiant testimony of a family: "We had been having some family problems which had been worrying us a great deal, and we truly felt that our prayers for our family were answered the day of the prayer vigil. We had one of the most delightful evenings at home together that we have ever had."

New Experience

A Missouri couple testified that their prayer experience of kneeling together in the prayer vigil was the first time they had ever prayed together as husband and wife.

Two brothers, the Rev. Larry Meredith, Dallas, Texas, and the Rev. M. M. Meredith, New Port Richey, Florida, found their prayer vigil falling on two consecutive days. They rejoiced in the comradeship of this coincidence.

In Brooklyn, Iowa, at Grace Methodist Church, the Rev. M. C. Shupe says that more than 500 persons participated in the prayer vigil in a church with only 528 members. Attendance is up about 50 per cent, finances are in good shape, and the pastor and the church are having their finest year. Mr. Shupe started his ministry in Brooklyn with request for daily prayer.

In Springfield, Oregon, the Methodist church helped to launch the year of continuous prayer under the leadership of the Rev. Harold Shellhart. Many of these church members have continued their prayers for peace and spiritual power.

In Belzoni, Mississippi, where several prayer cells and prayer visitors are active under the leadership of the Rev. John McCay, the church has received new members each week for more than 70 weeks. This is remarkable in a small town with a limited number of prospects.

The First Methodist Church in Tampa, Florida, under the leadership of the Rev. Millard C. Cleveland, had the joyous experience of intermediates, seniors, and older youth—with young adults and scores of others—coming in to pray.

From Panhandle, Texas, comes word through Mr. M. C. Davis, director of the prayer vigil, that his church, as a result of the prayer vigil, is now conducting a 30-minute service of prayer each Sunday evening preceding the regular service.

Inspiring Words

From the campus of the University of Minnesota in St. Paul, come the inspiring words of Dr. E. Clayton Burgess, pastor, St. Anthony Park Methodist Church: "We will have not less than 125 kneeling at the altar of this church in prayer. Some folks felt that this university community would never go for such a movement, but God can do wonderful things when given an opportunity."

In Wapanucka, Oklahoma, under the leadership of the Rev. R. B. Felix, pastor, the people read through the New Testament as part of their prayer vigil experience. Some read the Bible while others prayed.

Jacksonville, Florida, had a District prayer vigil with the Rev. Don A. Cooke, District Superintendent, and the Rev. Henry A. Guy, along with many ministers and church members taking part.

From First Methodist Church, Port Arthur, Texas, came a prayer meditation: "John Wesley's conception of a Methodist Society was 'A company of men loving the form of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work their salvation of love.' Let it be our prayerful concern that our local church reflect this spirit."

From Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, the Rev. Charles A. Holcomb suggests that the prayer vigil be made a regular part of the church program, with perhaps three or four being held each year, and that every year the vigil movement be carried on a national basis.

The Rev. Don Barnes, Bossier City, Louisiana, says, "The prayer vigil broadened our view of prayer. Several felt that the international problems and tensions ceased to be as they prayed."

From Cuba a prayer telegram came to the Rev. Carl Lueg, First Methodist Church, Lake Charles, Louisiana, with the words, "In Christ there is no North or South." Dr. Lueg and his church responded with a cable saying, "We are one in Him."

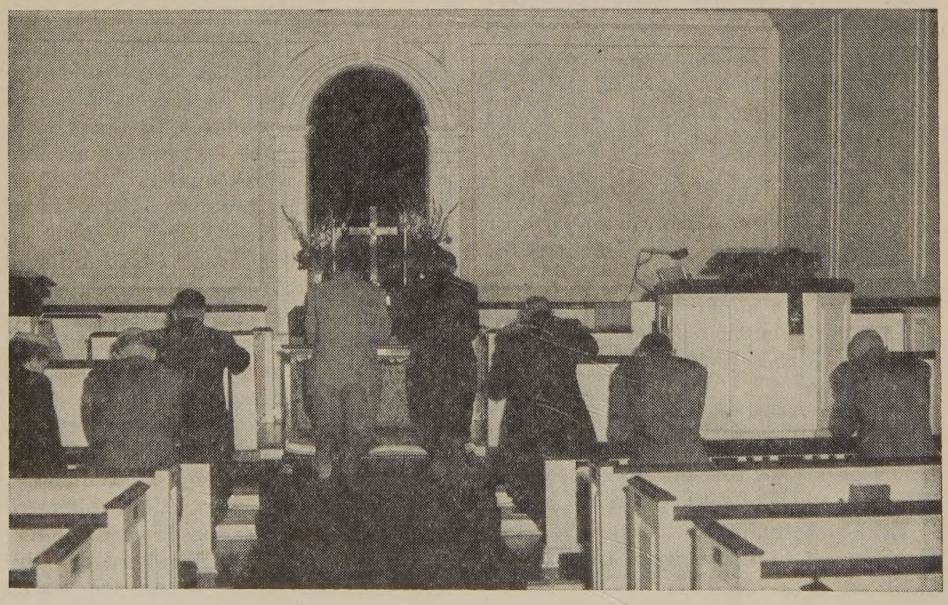
"Our prayer vigil was a tremendous experience with more than 250 persons taking part. Some felt that the sanctuary really became sacred to them for the first time." These words came from the Rev. Ira Flowers, Mangum Memorial Methodist Church, Shreveport, Louisiana.

Hundreds of Testimonies

Hundreds of testimonies have poured into the Prayer Life Movement office, 1908 Grand Avenue, Nashville 5, Tennessee, from every section of the nation. Churches, ministers, groups, families, and individuals are finding new life in Christ through this Movement.

The Prayer Revival near Iuka, Mississippi, under the leadership of the

Church members participate in a 24-hour prayer experience at Mt. Vernon Place Methodist Church, Washington, D. C.



Left, a family unites with the Prayer Life Movement through a prayer experience in the home, realizing that "Families that pray together stay together." Right, typical of the Prayer Cell significant to the Prayer Life Movement is the one shown here. Members of this cell are Harrell M. Russell, Superintendent, Tazewell (Virginia) District; W. Paul Worley, pastor, Munsey Memorial Church, Johnson City, Tennessee; M. S. Kincheloe, Superintendent, Wytheville (Virginia) District; D. Trigg James, Executive Secretary, Inter-Board Council, Holston Conference.

Rev. Garland Knott, saw more people join the church on profession of faith than these five churches had received in two years.

The County Prayer Revival in Prentiss County, Mississippi, under the leadership of the Rev. J. C. Christian, saw more persons won on profession of faith in one week than the whole county had won in 12 months of the previous Conference year.

The great Prayer Life Mission in Brownsville, Tennessee, attracted representatives from 151 churches and sent prayer visitors praying in homes of all races and creeds in the community.

The interdenominational, interracial Prayer Life Mission at Kingsport, Tennessee, had about 1,000 persons taking part under the dynamic ministry of Dr. Edward L. R. Elson, pastor to President Eisenhower.

Prayer missions, prayer retreats, prayer cells, prayer groups, and prayer vigils are now being developed in hundreds of churches across America. More than 30 different types of prayer experiences are being developed by the Prayer Life Movement.

The Prayer Life Movement is not an effort at conformity in prayer. This is a dynamic experience in "Loyalty and Adventure."

California prayer leaders have caught the genius of a great prayer movement in their spiritual exploration program "To discover the will of God—and to find the power to carry it out."

In May, 1954, the United States Supreme Court rendered its historic decision regarding segregation in public schools. In the same month, May 28, 1954, the first Prayer Life Mission of the Prayer Life Movement was held in Grenada, Mississippi.

Some believe that God has given us the "Prayer Life Movement" to help us meet the total challenge of our world at home and abroad and to share in prayer with Christ His compassion for the total redemption of mankind.

Helpful Suggestions

From the Rev. Jual R. Ford, pastor of First Methodist Church, Galesburg, Illinois, come these helpful suggestions for a follow-up of the prayer vigil: "Open the sanctuary for prayer in the evening and at noon time, with appropriate literature present. Organize small prayer groups to meet in homes. Have breakfast meetings at the church, followed by prayer. Hold evening prayer retreats in some secluded spot in the country. Stress a renewed emphasis on the family altar." More than 300 persons, including many youth, shared in the prayer vigil at Galesburg.

From a Jackson, Mississippi, pastor, the Rev. A. F. Gallman, comes this testimony: "Everyone who participated in our prayer vigil stated that it was one of the greatest experiences of his life, excelled only by the experience that came to him when he was converted. It has brought a real revival already in many hearts. This is the greatest movement of The Methodist Church since John Wesley came on the scene."

From Michigan comes the suggestion to join with other Protestant churches in the Prayer Movement.

From Christians in a number of places comes the dream of a world-wide chain of prayer in acceptance of the challenge of President Eisenhower.

An Arkansas District Superintendent says he never experienced anything like the united prayer in connection with the Geneva Conference.

Life Magazine gives an editorial, "Peace through Prayer," and the *Reader's Digest* sends its 65,000,000 readers an article, "Our Prayers Can Change the World." Surely, the time is near for another great prayer revival, even greater than the one America experienced in 1857.

Participants in the Prayer Life Mission held at Grenada, Mississippi.

PRAYER VIGILS

by

Carl Looney

Matewan, West Virginia

NOT for a moment do I doubt the leadership of the Holy Spirit in the great Prayer Life Movement sweeping across Methodism! In recent months I have seen more accomplished in transforming the life of a cold and indifferent church in waiting before God in a twenty-four hour Prayer Vigil than I used to see in ten days of preaching and singing. It seems that God has put into our hands a piece of spiritual power-equipment such as we have never dreamed possible for these difficult and challenging days.

It has been my privilege to lead five of these continuous Prayer Vigils. The first lasted seventy-two hours; the second, seventy-six hours; and the last three, twenty-four hours each. They were held in Virginia Avenue Methodist Church, Bluefield, West Virginia; Maybeury Church, West Virginia; Calvary Church, Moundsville, West Virginia; Emory and Henry College, Emory, Virginia; and Matewan Church, Matewan, West Virginia.

Lives Transformed

The presence of the Holy Spirit was manifest in the hours of waiting before God in power beyond any words of mine to describe. Lives were transformed, and blessings came in ways never before experienced in my ministry.

One mother remained in the Vigil for thirty-two hours out of the seventy-six.

A young Spanish mother walked more than two miles to lead one of the hours. Part of her testimony follows: "I have stayed up many nights with dead bodies; this is the first night I have stayed up with my living Lord."

A high school lad remained with another group through all the hours of the night. He said, "I have never in my life experienced what I did last night."

That sacred night at Emory and Henry College will live long and fresh on the pages of my memory. The girls of the college had to go to their own dormitory after midnight, but they organized a Vigil of their own, and continued with us in the spirit of the Vigil, though they had to meet separately for the few hours until dawn. The memorable prayers that were offered by President Gibson, Dean Armbrister, faculty members, and the wonderful students cannot be soon forgotten by the one who led those services. Three young men surrendered to the call of the ministry, and about sixty confessions and rededications were counted. The spirit of prayer seemed to prevail over the entire campus. I left those wonderful four nights of triumph and victory with the wish that I could share the strength and joys of a twenty-four hour Prayer Vigil and Preaching Mission on the campus of every Methodist College in America.

Mechanics Simple

The mechanics of these Vigils are very simple. In a small church we ask one person to be in charge of each hour. We will ask others of his friends or prayer partners to join him. They are instructed to wait before God in meditation, testimony, prayer, song, or whatever the Spirit may lead them to do. In a larger church the young people take one hour; the Board of Stewards, another; the Woman's Society, another; and so on until every group or organization of the church has been called into responsibility.

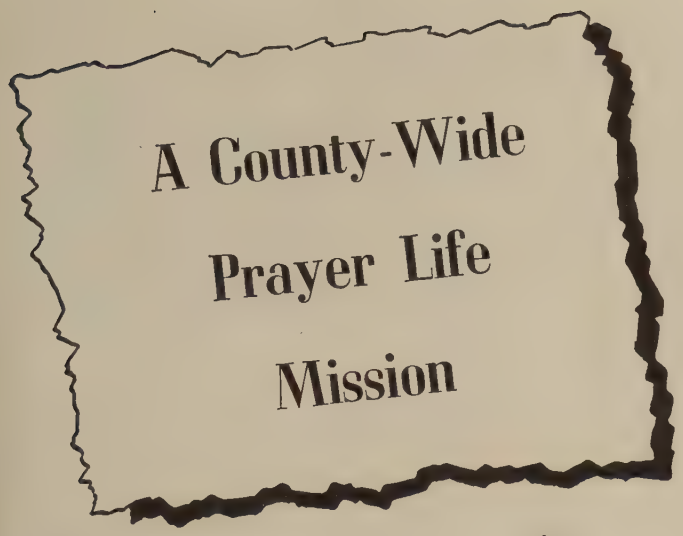
At strategic hours we ask each person or group to share the blessings of the preceding hours. The entire membership of the church is asked to be present for the final hour of sharing. Oh, how the love of God fills our hearts, and showers of spiritual blessings fall as we share in the individual blessings that have been ours across those wonderful hours of the Vigil! Sometimes the spiritual tides rise to such heights that many of us will stay for hours and hours and never become sleepy or tired. How a refreshed and victorious mind can boost a tired and sleepy body!

We try always to have these services in the church in the main sanctuary or a smaller chapel. The spiritual enlargement that comes to those taking part helps to exalt the place of the church in the individual heart and mind. For instance, after several hours of prayer and leading in one of these great experiences, I retired to my room for a little rest. Soon I was awake and alert and wanted to be back at the chapel. On the way to church I stopped at the home of a very consecrated mother, told her to grab her hat, and go with me to church. Just as the steeple and cross of the church came into view, I saw a beauty about the church I had never before realized. Just as I was being gripped by a deep and wonderful emotion. I said: "Look at the steeple of that church." At once she burst into a glorious shout and continued giving praise to God as we drove on to the church. I cannot drive by that church now without a desire to take off my hat and breathe a quiet prayer of thanksgiving for the memory of those glorious days when God was so real, heaven so near, and His people so victorious.

New Heights

In these Vigils of Prayer we see quiet people, who never before had led in public prayer or given a testimony, begin to break loose and share. We see the consecrated people of the church reaching new heights of a richer experience and higher fellowship with Christ. We see young people finding their places of usefulness in the life of the church. We find the over-all atmosphere of the church enlarged. Of course, we have some nights of preparation preceding the Vigil and some days of harvest following. Much of the power of the Vigil will never be realized unless there is careful planning before and after.

If you want something wonderful to happen to you, lead your people, and follow God in one of these continuous seasons of prayer. Be willing to begin, but let the Spirit lead you about the closing. The grand climax may not be reached before two or three days of waiting before God! "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."



Plan Used in Neshoba County, Mississippi

Date:

October 23-28 (First Methodist Church, October 23-30)

Place:

Neshoba County, Mississippi. The First Methodist Church of Philadelphia, Mississippi, will be headquarters.

Scope:

County-wide revival in all the Methodist churches, with the exception of the Hope Circuit.

Leaders:

Thomas A. Carruth; J. M. Jones, District Superintendent; and James R. Grisham, Director of Evangelism, North Mississippi Conference.

Purpose:

To undertake to rediscover the power of prayer and, through this power, to harness the whole Methodist Church into a truly evangelistic, missionary and Christian educational force for Christ on earth.

Churches Participating:

First Methodist, Philadelphia; Southside, Philadelphia; Sandtown; Bond; Coy; Cook's Chapel; Mars Hill; Longino; Sandhill; Stallo; Henry's Chapel; Hester's Chapel. In Newton County: First Methodist, Newton; First Methodist, Union. In Kemper County: First Methodist, DeKalb.

Procedure:

1. A visiting minister for every church in the county.
2. Simultaneous evening services in all Methodist churches in the county.
3. The visiting ministers to attend 7:00 A.M. services at the Philadelphia First Methodist Church *Everyone* invited to these great services.
4. Following the morning services and a period of fellowship, sharing, and instructions, the visiting ministers to return with the pastors to the churches to visit and have prayer in every home.
5. On Saturday of the week of the Mission a mass youth service to be conducted at the First Methodist Church in Philadelphia.
6. Laymen from different churches to fill the pulpits vacated by the visiting ministers on Sunday, October 30.
7. A 24-hour prayer vigil in at least one church on each participating charge during the week of the Prayer Life Mission.
8. A great Sunday afternoon Mass Rally (October 30) at the First Methodist Church, Philadelphia, at 2:30 o'clock.
9. An evaluation meeting of preachers and key laymen at Philadelphia at 10:00 A.M. on Monday, October 31, under leadership of Mr. Carruth.

This will be the first County-Wide Prayer Revival in the Mississippi Conference. We urge you to pray for us and with us for this outstanding undertaking. "May our county really become a great force for Christ and His Church."

This is our prayer.

Calendar for Work to be Done

Leading up to, and during, the Week of October 23-28.

1. Search your own life in the light of the Holy Spirit through prayer. Study the enclosed copy of the "rules" of the old Methodist "Societies." Are you a Christian? Do you pray daily? Do you *meet God* when you pray?
2. Your pastor will be preaching on prayer during each of the Sundays between now and the start of the Mission. Pray for him; attend each service; invite others to attend.
3. Take a survey of your community before the Mission starts. October 16-30 is "Survey Period" in the entire Meridian District. Give your pastor your voluntary assistance. Know every person: *who* he is, *where* he is, *what* he is, *where* he belongs to church, and *whether* or not he goes to church *and* Sunday school.
4. Pray for the Prayer Life Mission. This program is the "number one" event on the calendar of the Mississippi Conference Program for this year. We are having our Mission on a county-wide basis in an endeavor to bring the best possible leadership to all our churches.

   The Prayer Life Mission has in it a spiritual strategy which God gave to the First-Century Christians. These early dynamic Christians had three great elements at the heart of Christ's movement: (1) They knew that Jesus had risen from the dead; therefore, they realized His Presence. (2) They remembered the promise of His Power, "Greater things than these shall you do, because I go to my Father." They realized the power of the Holy Spirit. (3) The early Christians knew an intimate prayer fellowship. In small groups, they

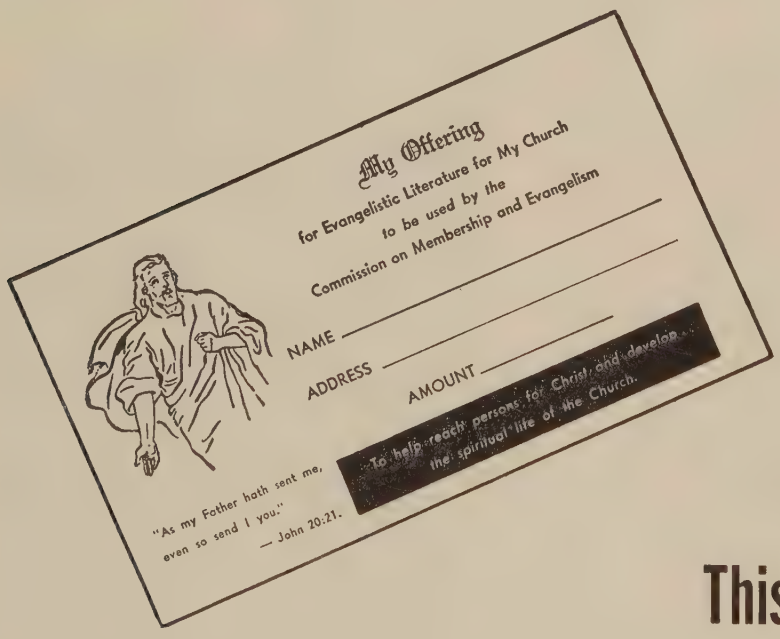
called each other's names in prayer.

Out of these little Spirit-filled prayer groups, captured by the Presence of the risen Christ, came the genius of the Christian movement that has spanned more than 19 centuries.

The Challenge: Many Christians feel today that the supreme challenge of this hour is to recapture the spiritual strategy which gave rise to the Christian movement and which has been its medium of strength through the centuries. So many wonderful experiments have been made with small prayer groups that no longer does a question of whether this method will work arise. The supreme question is, "Will you work it?"

A Good Prayer Life Mission has Four Dimensions:

1. *The In-Reach:* It is planned to inspire all the inactive members of the church to become a faithful part of some prayer group that will call their names each day in prayer.
2. *The Out-Reach:* The mission is planned to reach, through prayer visits and through daily prayer lists, all the prospective members and all on the constituency roll of the local church.
3. *The Down-Reach:* The prayer mission is planned to inspire the deepest possible consecration on the part of the minister and the most consecrated people in the local church. Many good faithful church members are anxious to find "the warm heart" that John Wesley knew at Aldersgate.
4. *The Up-Reach:* When the prayer cell has become solid in its consecration and faithfulness and empowered by the presence of the Holy Spirit, the unit members will learn to *look up* continually to God for guidance, for power, and for effective ways of continually winning persons to a real experience of God. The prayer cell becomes a *channel* of grace. Their concern is as wide as the needs of the human race.


My Offering
for Evangelistic Literature for My Church
to be used by the
Commission on Membership and Evangelism
NAME
ADDRESS
AMOUNT
To help reach persons for Christ and develop the spiritual life of the Church.
"As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."
— John 20:21.

More Money for Evangelistic Literature Through This Attractive, Free Envelope

Every local church Commission on Membership and Evangelism can increase the effectiveness of its work through greater use of evangelistic materials and literature. Therefore, all churches should allot in their annual budget adequate amounts for this purpose. But where that has not been done, we make the following suggestions:

First, that the Commission members familiarize themselves with such basic evangelistic items as SHEPHERDS, the monthly Journal of Evangelism; Visitation Evangelism Packets; Spiritual Life Packets; Church Attendance Movement Packets; Turn Over Charts; TIDINGS Tracts-of-the-Month, and TIDINGS evangelistic books.

Second, that the pastor, the Commission chairman, or his representative present to the congregation the need for evangelistic literature and the ways in which its use will strengthen the church. Let an explanatory letter be mailed to members and constituents prior to the service where this is done.

Third, that the pastor, the Commission chairman, or his representative distribute the special evangelistic literature offering envelopes which TIDINGS will provide *free* to churches for this special appeal at the church service. Let the need for evangelistic material be forcefully presented immediately before the envelopes are distributed. Make the offering a significant part of the worship by consecrating it to the obtainment of evangelistic materials that will win persons to Christ and deepen the spiritual life of those who are already Christians. Be sure to receive the offering in the same service where the need and spiritual power of evangelistic materials have been presented.

Write *today* for your supply of the very attractive envelopes which TIDINGS has prepared for this purpose. Be sure to include in your request the total membership of your church. **Address your request to Tidings, Headquarters for Evangelistic Materials, 1908 Grand Avenue, Nashville 5, Tennessee.**

Prayer and Collective Action

by Bishop John Wesley Lord

Boston Area

(Adapted from Keynote Address at New England Conference, May 25, 1955, Westfield, Massachusetts)

AMONG people of good will, the day of positive polarization is at work in this calamitous hour of human history. How may we aid and accentuate it within the New England Conference?

1. In the establishment of Prayer Retreats as a permanent part of the work of the local church. I read recently that 200 churches in Southern California and Arizona were engaged in a project called "Spiritual Exploration," the purpose being to search for the answers to two questions: "How can we find the will of God in all areas of life? How can we get power to do that which is pleasing to God?" There is no finer way to find the will of God for all areas of life, and the power to do what is pleasing to God, than through prayer that leads to self-diagnosis and commitment. If each church in the Boston Area would establish such Prayer Retreats, untold good would result.

In this plan, the minister of the local church is expected to form groups of not more than ten or fifteen members each, which will meet at various times for prayer and serious conversation about controversial issues of Christian concern. These meetings will be seasons of intimate sharing. Such a book as "How to Find the Will of God," by Kirby Page, might be a fruitful study book. I believe that professional men and scientific men would welcome such informal and intimate opportunities to satisfy the spiritual hunger which they feel, and to see what their lives would become if God had his way with them. The Prayer Retreat would be a time to saturate the mind with the teachings of Jesus, and a time to choose the risks of doing God's will.

If such Prayer Retreats were established in the program of every church in the New England Conference, there would be, I am convinced, such an increase in church attendance, such increased giving, such growth in Christian life and character as would amaze the Conference statistician, treasurer, and cabinet. A tablet in the Old South Meeting House in Boston describes our Revoluntionary forefathers as "worthy to raise issues." One of the saddest commentaries on our culture is that we are both unwilling and unworthy to raise issues.

2. A corollary of the establishment of Prayer Retreats would be the acceptance of increased individual responsibility for collective action. This is required in the free society. Alexander Maclaren in "Christ's Musts" has this startling paragraph:

> ". . . let me remind you that the devil has no more cunning way of securing a long lease of life for any evil than getting Christian people and Christian churches to give it their sanction. What was it that kept slavery alive for centuries? Largely, that Christian men solemnly declared that it was a divine institution. What is it that has kept war alive for all these centuries? Largely, that bishops and preachers have always been ready to bless colors, and to read a christening service over a man-of-war and, I suppose, to ask God that an eighty-ton gun might be blessed to smash our enemies to pieces, and not to blow our sailors to bits. And what is it that preserves the crying evils of our community, the immoralities, the drunkenness, the trade dishonesty, and all the other things that I do not need to remind you of in the pulpit? Largely this, that professing Christians are mixed up with them. If only the whole body of those who profess and call themselves Christian would shake their hands clear of all complicity with such things, they could not last. Individual responsibility for collective action needs to be far more solemnly laid to heart by professing Christians than ever it has been."

I believe that the tide is turning in America toward more healthful and hopeful manifestations of national and international life. The fever of McCarthyism has abated somewhat; Communism is no longer a primary concern of most of our people. There is no acute hysteria today, but, through and by means of proper education and creative altruism or positive polarization in people of good will, there is coming a greater tolerance and a stronger will to love those whom we do not understand but with whom we must live. Cooperation will replace coexistence. Latest reports reveal that 75 percent of our people now favor our continued support of the United Nations Organization.

In closing this address let me suggest as a slogan for the year ahead the words: "If God Had His Way." What sort of person would I become if God had His way with me? What kind of church would mine be if God had His way with the church? What would our world be if God had His way?

Twenty-five Japanese maidens are in our country, victims of a bomb that was dropped on their city. They come with their disfigured faces and bodies as ambassadors of love and good will. They remind us of our sin, but also that the heart of America is kind and that responsible action on the part of one man brought this voyage to pass.

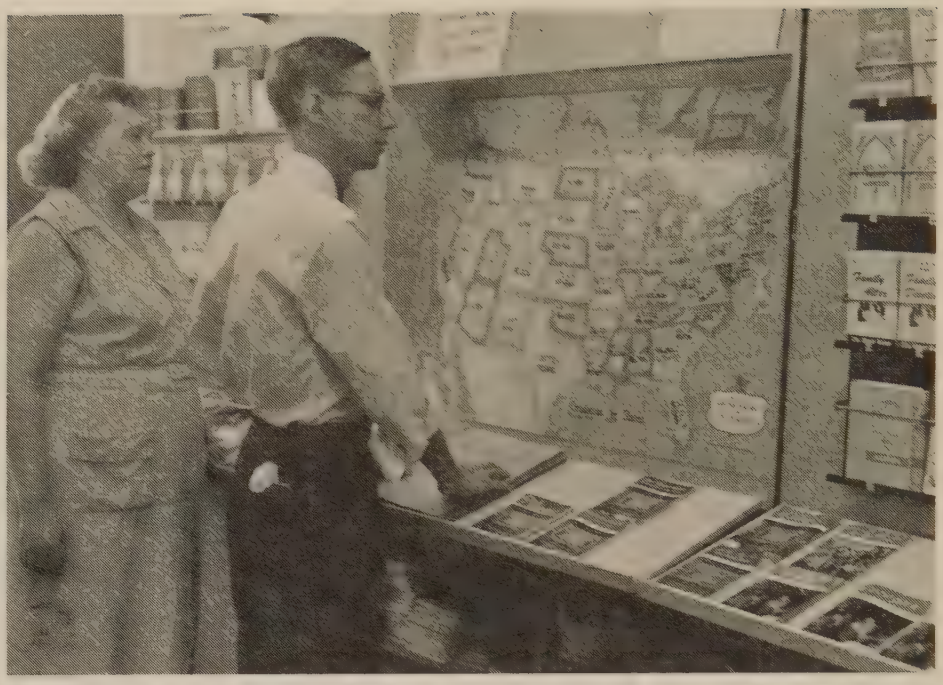
If God has His way, America will never drop another bomb. Norman Cousins, who tells the story of the Japanese maidens, also tells of a telegram received from a man who identified himself as Robert Lewis. It read:

> "I just wanted to say how personally grateful I am for this project. I was the captain of the plane that dropped the bomb."

Norman Cousins has set an example for all to follow; namely, individual responsibility for collective action.

—*From* Zion's Herald,
June-July, 1955

Sensitive Fingers "See" The Chapel



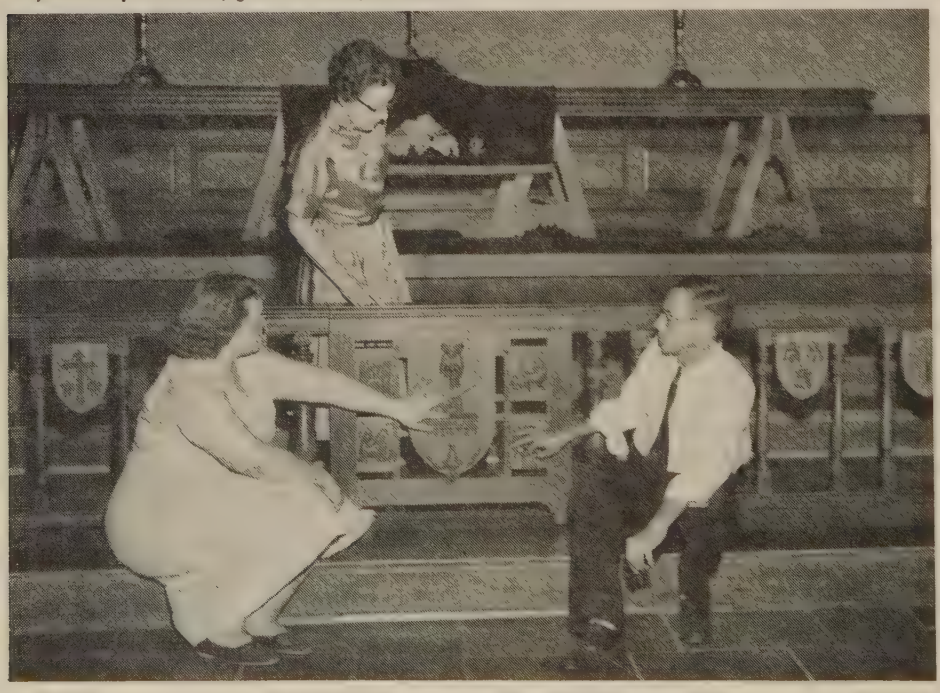
Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Beasley, Nashville, Tennessee, study the Braille edition of *The Upper Room* as they stand before the display in the library of The Upper Room Building.

ONE morning in the library of THE UPPER ROOM building, there was a large number of visitors present—some registering, some perusing the display of devotional literature, some looking over the fascinating 26 foreign language editions, others preparing to join the chapel hostess, Miss Katherine Campbell, on a tour and interpretation of the chapel itself. Suddenly a joyous voice exclaimed: "Why here is a copy of THE UPPER ROOM in the Braille—and we can read it!" The speaker was a young woman, her countenance aglow with the happiness of her discovery. She was Mrs. Vernon Beasley of Nashville, who, with her blind husband, had been brought to visit THE UPPER ROOM.

Mr. and Mrs. Beasley are not totally blind; they are designated as "industrially blind." She operates the concession stand at the State Capitol Building, and he is studying electronics. They were both educated at the Tennessee State School for the Blind where their three children, who are also blind, now attend. The Beasleys are members of the Third Baptist Church in Nashville. Her grandfather is the Reverend C. G. Butler, a retired Methodist minister now residing in Bruceton, Tennessee.

They both read Braille, and they were delighted to find this edition of THE UPPER ROOM. During their visit, Mrs. Beasley transcribed a letter written in Braille which had been received by THE UPPER ROOM from England. When it was brought to her, she ran her sensitive fingers over the page and said: "Oh, I can read it. It is written in Grade 1½." Then she gave some interesting information concerning Braille type. Grade 1 is the "A B C" of Braille; Grade 1½ is the most widely used; Grade 2 is more condensed; and Grade 3 is the "shorthand" of Braille. Incidentally, the letter was from a blind person in England who has been receiving the Braille edition of THE UPPER ROOM through the Braille Gift Fund, and she wanted her subscription renewed. She also requested a subscription for a friend.

The Beasleys run their sensitive fingers over the symbols in the chancel rail as Miss Katherine Campbell, the Chapel Hostess, gives an interpretation.



Share With Friends

The visit of the Beasleys to The Upper Room Chapel was most interesting for them and for those who watched. They could see enough of the outline of the wood carving of *The Last Supper* to appreciate the interpretation given by Miss Campbell. The symbols on the chancel rail were not as visible, so as Miss Campbell explained them, they followed with their fingers. They left with a glow upon their faces which thrilled, yet humbled, those who saw them. They now receive each Braille issue and have added the names of some of their friends that they may have the joy of this devotional guide.

No edition of THE UPPER ROOM gives more joy than the Braille with its

Braille editions of *The Upper Room* go to a home for blind girls in Jerusalem, Jordan, near the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

1,200 copies each issue. "You have no idea what it means to the blind," wrote a sightless person to Miss M. L. Chatham, director of The Fellowship of the Upper Room. The writer was expressing her deep gratitude for her gift subscription. She was both deaf and blind, so could not hear the radio or the "talking books." She is one of 190 persons given a Braille subscription through the Gift Fund.

Braille Reaches Far

But the Braille edition reaches far beyond this hemisphere. In Jerusalem, Jordan, near the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, there is a home for fifty blind girls. This home opened in April, 1935, with one little girl. The same year across the waters in Nashville, Tennessee, the first edition of THE UPPER ROOM came from the press. The Blind Girls' Home in Jerusalem was unheard of in the editorial offices at that time; but it was destined that this devotional guide should be read by the blind in the very city where Jesus opened the eyes of the blind two thousand years ago. From the principal of the home came this letter: "Your wonderful service in providing THE UPPER ROOM in Braille for the blind is very near to the heart of our dear Lord, I am sure. You are giving the world a great blessing, and we appreciate your gift of this edition."

Many Languages Read

The Braille edition is not the only edition of THE UPPER ROOM now read in the city of Jerusalem. Dr. J. Manning Potts, editor of this devotional guide, found many persons in Jerusalem reading the Arabic, the Armenian and the English editions. In Teheran he made an interesting discovery one day —several women in a small room were reading four different editions of THE UPPER ROOM. They were the Armenian, the Persian, the Arabic and the English. They revealed to Dr. Potts their deep interest in a Russian edition which could be made available to the Russian refugees in Iran. He has now made this possible.

Miss May Martin, who has been a guest in the Blind Girls' Home in Nashvile, Tennessee, for thirteen years, has also enjoyed the Braille edition of THE UPPER ROOM for a long time. A friend in St. Louis, Missouri, first placed a subscription for her. This edition is read by several others in the Home, and those who cannot read Braille enjoy hearing it read. Miss Martin said THE UPPER ROOM is the favorite of all the devotional books going to that home.

The Braille Fund Ministry

The steadily increasing cost of labor and the advances in the price of paper and of the materials used in printing the Braille edition have resulted in a sharp increase in production costs.

For years, readers of *The Upper Room* have made it possible, through the Braille Fund, to offer subscriptions to the blind at less than the per copy printing cost. The Braille Fund has provided free copies of the Braille edition to blind persons without funds.

Shall the Braille edition be available free to persons who cannot afford the subscription rate? Shall the subscription rate be continued at $2.00 per year? The answers must be found in the contributions to the Braille Fund.

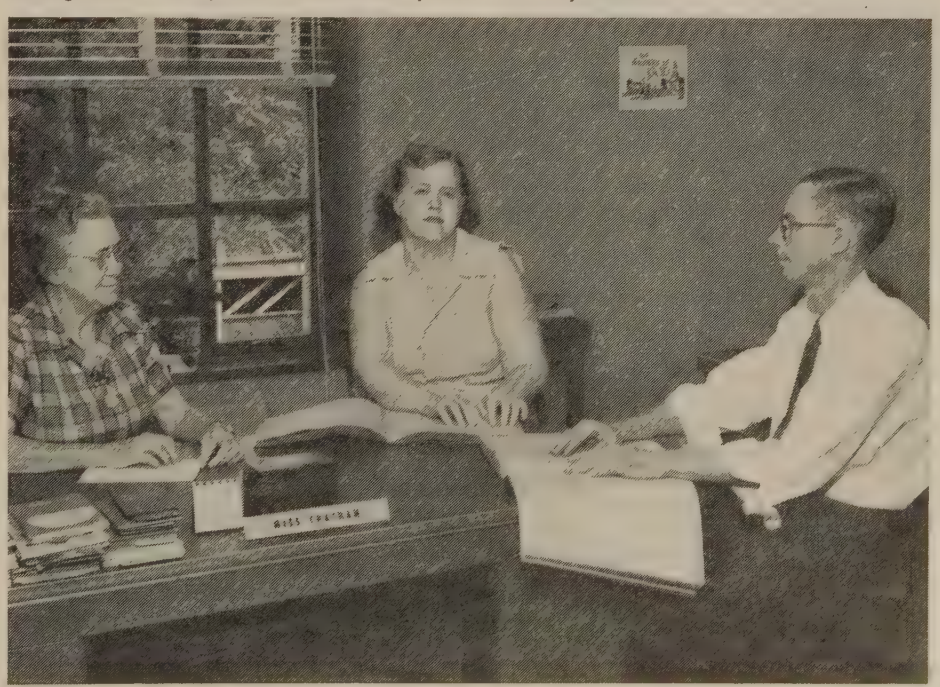
Send your gifts—money orders or checks—to The Upper Room Braille Fund, 1908 Grand Avenue, Nashville 5, Tennessee.

A sample copy—back issue—of the Braille edition is available on request—as long as the supply lasts.

Chaplains Welcome Braille

Other recipients of the Braille copies are Veterans Hospitals where the blind servicemen welcome the arrival of each new issue. Chaplains of these hospitals often say THE UPPER ROOM is the most popular of all the devotional books received.

Mr. and Mrs. Beasley talk with Miss Mattie Lee Chatham, director of The Upper Room Fellowship, concerning the Gift Fund, which makes Braille possible for many readers.



The Prayer Life Movement

in Local Churches, Conferences, States, and Areas

Prayer Vigil

First Methodist Church
Osawatomie, Kansas
by William I. Hastie, Pastor

RAIN came down in torrents! There was much thunder and lightning! For four hours, from 1:00 A.M. until a little after 5:00 A.M., our Vigil of Prayer was bombarded by a terrific storm—and yet, not one single person failed to keep his vigil. More than the actual number who were signed ahead of time came to share in the most wonderful experience our church has had, perhaps, in its 100 years of history.

Truly, it was an inspiring 24-hour period of prayer and devotion. The sanctuary was the center of the vigil, though many carried on their vigil in their homes, especially the shut-ins and aged people who found it too difficult to come to the church. At times, the altar rail was filled with worshipers, and at other times there was just a single figure kneeling there.

On the platform, from which the pulpit had been removed, there was a picture of Hoffman's "Christ in Gethsemane," softly lighted and flanked by two candelabra. High in the back, against the red drapes, was placed the shining brass cross, to be seen by eyes that were lifted above the picture. In another part of the sanctuary there was a large, lighted picture of Sallman's "Head of Christ," furnishing a different sort of inspiration from that of the Gethsemane scene.

As the worshipers came into the vestibule, they found a large book, entitled, "A Golden Chain of Prayer." One hundred and eighty-five names are registered, with the time of day or night that the individuals served in the vigil. It is a surprising record of the praying members.

As suggested by the Prayer Life Movement, we had an ample supply of devotional pamphlets, as well as larger books on prayer. They were used constantly.

The pastor and the chairman of our Commission on Membership and Evangelism were on watch all through the night, from 6:00 P.M. Sunday until about 5:30 A.M. Monday, making it just a bit easier for people to come in alone in the darker, stormier hours of the night. It was a glorious experience for us, too!

Our final 30 minutes were devoted to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, with a small group of the really faithful folk present. It was another rich experience—truly a consecration service to top a great period of prayer and worship. As one of our young women, the president of the Wesleyan Service Guild, told me afterwards (she remained in the sanctuary from 5:20 A.M. until about 7:00 A.M.), "Oh, you don't know how much bigger and better I felt when I started home to my family!"

Our church will be stronger spiritually, and far more energetic evangelistically, than ever before as a result of this Prayer Vigil.

Minter City and the Prayer Life Movement

by Mrs. J. K. Tate
Minter City, Mississippi

THE Minter City Methodist Church, J. W. Chatham, Jr., pastor, organized its first prayer groups in April, 1954, during a revival led by Thomas A. Carruth of Nashville, Tennessee. This great spiritual movement is spreading like wild-fire; and the roots of a faith in Christ are ever growing deeper as a church of praying people humbly rededicate their lives to God.

It is hard to describe the many ways in which God has worked in our church and community through prayer. One would not see a miracle in the outside appearance of Minter City should he drive along the tiny main street today. Yet should he stop and talk with some of the people, he would see the miracle in their faces, feel it in their handclasps, and hear it as they relate their

The Methodist Church, Minter City, Mississippi.

testimonies. He would realize it is a deep down faith coming from within the hearts of a people who have found God.

A thousand requests for prayer came to our pastor and church in the course of one month. A group meets on Thursday night and prays for these names that have been recorded in a permanent prayer book.

Members of a church of another denomination requested prayer for "A revival in their church exactly like the one Minter City had in 1954." One lady wrote and said, "Please pray for me and my brother."

A man who lost his wife requested prayer for himself and his children. Many requests come for the sick, for children, for wayward daughters and sons. The largest number of requests have been for spiritual revivals in other churches.

It is amazing to note the large number who call or write back to say, "Thank you for your prayers. They have helped so much." One lady said, "Thank you. We felt the presence of the Holy Spirit when you prayed for us during a recent illness."

A pastor called late one night to share the good news that three members of a family of four for whom we had been praying had joined the church.

Mr. Carruth had a list of Madame Chiang Kai-shek's prayer group. He shared this list with us at Minter City. Immediately, the Woman's Society of Christian Service and the Wesleyan Service Guild of the Church began praying for them by name. We wrote

Madame Chiang, sending her a list of our groups and their names opposite the person's name who was praying daily for them. They have taken our names in daily prayer in like manner. In reply, Madame Chiang wrote:

Dear Mrs. Tate:

Thank you very much for your letter of June 22nd, enclosing the names of the members of your prayer group who are praying for our prayer groups.

I read your letter aloud at one of our meetings. Every one was much moved, and we prayed as a group that day for your group.

At the next meeting a copy of the list of the names of those praying for us was given to each member to pray daily and individually for her opposite number.

With every good wish.

Yours sincerely,

Madame Chiang Kai-shek

One member of our prayer group moved to another town six months ago. Last week she joined a prayer group with the pastor's wife and three others. They are praying that others will join.

We realize that this wonderful miracle of group praying is not new. It is as old as time itself—yet as modern and as new as tomorrow.

24-Hour Prayer Vigil at Catalina Methodist Church

THE Youth Division of Catalina Methodist Church sponsored a 24-Hour Prayer Vigil November 4 and 5 as a part of the series sponsored by the General Board of Evangelism, reports Hayden Sears, pastor. At Catalina the vigil was set up in half-hour periods, with the number at the altar varying from three to 15. Over 300 participated, and many lingered at the altar far beyond their designated time.

A special addition to the vigil at Catalina was the use of recorded organ selections, played very softly as a background. One of the things that added to the beauty of the service was the perfectly amazing floral decoration of the altar by Mrs. Elizabeth Crozier Campbell in memory of her husband, William Henry Campbell.

It was a day that will long be remembered in Catalina Church for the strange peace and quietness it brought to the souls of the participants and for the renewed dedication to Christ and the Church which was inspired at the altar.

This was the opening of Loyalty Month, and it inspired much of the dedication for the following Sunday when 1,251 people attended the morning worship service and 400 families made their pledges to the church. Also, the youth responded by pledging $1,600 in one morning toward their budget of $2,660, placing their pledges at the altar along with the adults.

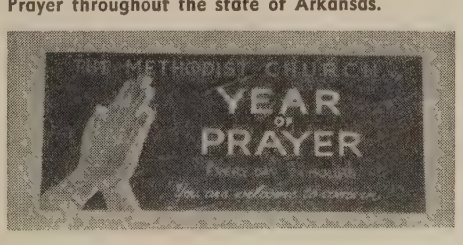
Prayer, we feel, is the heartbeat of our evangelistic program in which every two weeks we have approximately 30 youth and 40 adults visiting in the homes of prospective members of the church.

In October, 85 new members were received in Catalina Church as we made preparation for the prayer vigil. To date this conference year, 228 persons have united with our church.

The Prayer Vigil Movement in the Louisiana Conference

THE Prayer Life Movement in the Louisiana Conference will cover the period of January 1, 1956 to June 1 (the meeting of the Annual Conference), reports W. D. Boddie, pastor, David Haas Memorial Methodist Church, Bunkie, Louisiana. During the month of November, at the eight District Conferences, the churches were given opportunity to volunteer to participate in the Vigil by accepting a 24-hour period, during which continuous prayer was to be in progress at the church, as well as in the homes of shut-ins. The Chairman of the Prayer Life Movement Council is W. D. Boddie. He is also Chairman of the Conference Board of Evangelism. Mr. Boddie is presenting the cause to six of the District Conferences, and Thomas A Carruth of the General Board of Evangelism is presenting it to the New Orleans and the Baton Rouge Districts.

Outdoor poster advertising promotes the Year of Prayer throughout the state of Arkansas.



Louisville Conference Prayer Vigil

UNDER the direction of Harlan B. Hilbun, new full-time Conference Director of Evangelism, the Louisville Conference has outlined and is executing a challenging and inviting program of evangelism. Included in this program is a full year's (1956) Virgil of Prayer, full promotion of the World Wide Church Attendance Movement, the use of Commando Teams of ministers to eliminate barren charges, and a Preachers' Revival.

Bishop Initiates Program

Beginning at midnight on January 1, Bishop William T. Watkins, the District Superintendents of the Conference, the Conference Director of Evangelism, and possibly a few other evangelistic leaders will engage in a six-hour Vigil of Prayer lasting until 6:00 o'clock A.M. Beginning at 6:00 o'clock A.M. on January 1 with a church in the Henderson District, on each successive day throughout the entire year, beginning at 6:00 o'clock A.M. until 6:00 o'clock A.M., one or more churches throughout the Conference will conduct a 24-Hour Vigil of

Visitation enables shut-ins to share the Prayer Life Movement.

Prayer. The following time schedule by months, has been agreed upon by the Districts:

Henderson District: January and July

Hopkinsville District: February and August

Campbellsville District: March and September

Louisville East and Louisville West Districts: April and October

Bowling Green District: May and November

Owensboro District: June and December

The churches of Louisville Con-

ference will cooperate with the World Wide Church Attendance Movement and will emphasize church attendance in a special and concerted way from January 1 through Easter Sunday. The month of January will be observed as a month of consecration for all church members. The month of February will be utilized as a month of locating and cultivating prospects for church membership, both those who have never made profession of faith in Christ and those who have their church memberships elsewhere. The month of March will be observed as a month of witnessing, of seeking to win persons to Christ and His Church by regular organized "two-by-two" visitation evangelism and by personal evangelism. The month of April, beginning with a glorious Easter Sunday of ingathering, will be devoted to a month of continuation of the holy purposes and habits of the January to Easter Movement.

Very significant and unusual in the evangelistic program of the Louisville Conference will be the Preachers' Revival to be attended, as nearly as possible, by all the ministers in the Conference. It will be held in St. Paul's Church, Louisville, March 12-14. Bishop Marvin A. Franklin of the Jackson Area will bring the principal devotional messages. It is hoped that this week will do much to temper the minds and spirits of all the ministers to the pervading presence of God in their life and labors and to prepare them for the greatest season of evangelistic ingathering that any Lenten period has brought.

Wilmington Manor Methodist Church, Wilmington Manor, New Castle, Delaware, had a 10-day "round the clock" prayer vigil in the last of November.

Brooks Reynolds is the pastor.

Chain of Prayer in Georgia

by Frank L. Robertson
Pastor, St. Lukes Memorial Church
Columbus, Georgia

MORE than 1,600 Methodist churches in Georgia are being called upon to participate in the State-wide Chain of Prayer during 1956. In this endeavor the Methodists of Georgia are joining a growing number of Conferences, States, and Episcopal Areas as participants in the Prayer Life Movement of the General Board of Evangelism.

Upon recommendation by the Boards of Evangelism of the North Georgia and South Georgia Conferences, the two Annual Conferences in session at Athens and Savannah in June, 1955, unanimously voted to call the churches in Georgia to continuous prayer in 1956.

Churches of South Georgia will schedule 24-hour prayer vigils during the first and third quarters of the year. The second and fourth quarter will be kept in prayer by churches in the North Georgia Conference.

Local Church Leadership

The periods of time are being distributed equally among the Districts. Each District Secretary of Evangelism in November and early December, 1955, invited the churches of his District to call their members and friends to prayer for a 24-hour period. Suggestions as to how to plan each local church's share in the Chain of Prayer were mailed each pastor. Local church Commissions on Membership and Evangelism were asked to give leadership to the prayer vigil in their churches.

"As the Church of Jesus Christ we cannot go farther until we have gone deeper," said Bishop Arthur J. Moore, presiding officer of the two Georgia Conferences.

Commenting on the 1956 Chain of Prayer in Georgia, Frank L. Robertson, Chairman of the South Georgia Conference Board of Evangelism, said, "Every effort is being made in the Prayer Life Movement in our area to avoid regimentation and too much organization and to make room for that freedom and spontaneity which are vital in great spiritual movements. Churches in our area which have participated in the 1955 nation-wide Chain of Prayer have invariably testified to increased spiritual vitality growing out of their vigils and their newly-born prayer groups."

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For all who share the Prayer Vigil
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To be taken home after the Vigil
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TIDINGS
1908 Grand Avenue
Nashville 5, Tennessee

Prayer Vigils in Missouri

by Carlton Knight
Pastor, Bolivar, Missouri

LAST spring we had a preliminary meeting of the three Conference Secretaries—at which time we discussed the possibilities of a Prayer Vigil for 1956 and secured the approval of the three Cabinets, also in session the same day. At our Area Pastors' School in June we called a joint meeting of the three Boards and voted to include such a plan in our next year's programs to be presented to our Conferences, meeting in October. I was elected chairman of an executive committee to work out plans for procedure. The committee included the Chairman and Conference Secretaries of the three Boards of Evangelism.

We worked out a calendar, with each Conference taking every third day in 1956. Each Conference Secretary is assigning churches to the dates selected for his Conference.

We are naturally placing as great a stress as we can on the fact that the 24-hour vigil is not to be an end in itself but a means of deepening the prayer life of the congregation participating, emphasizing the organization of prayer cells, groups, and the Fellowship of the Concerned.

We are in the process of arranging some suggestions for carrying out the prayer vigils, which will be sent to each participating church a few weeks in advance of its date.

Kansas Area Prayer Vigil

The Area Council, the Kansas Area, upon the recommendation of the Area Cabinet, voted to observe a continuous prayer vigil during 1956, Bishop Dana Dawson has announced. Each District has assumed responsibility for one month. The assignments are as follows:

Ottawa District—January
Salina District—February
Hays District—March
Wichita District—April
Emporia District—May
Concordia District—June
Topeka District—July
Winfield District—August
Independence District—September
Kansas City District—October
Hutchinson District—November
Dodge City District—December

PRAYER PROGRAMS

First Methodist Church
Little Rock, Arkansas

by Georgia McDonald
Director, Methodist Information
Arkansas-Louisiana Area

A PROGRAM combining prayer groups, evangelism, and Bible reading is under way at the First Methodist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas; and Dr. A. G. Walton, pastor, says he believes the plan is just what the already active church needs for a deep, spiritual undergirding.

More than 800 First Church members are now actively engaged in the program, which officially began on September 27. Dr. Walton expects 2,000 of the 3,065 members of the church to be participating before the first of the year.

"Members of our church always amaze you with their ability to make a program successful," Dr. Walton explained.

Enthusiastic Response

In the 12 years that he has been minister, the church has completed a half million dollar building program; the budget has been increased from $33,000 to $121,000; and the congregation supports a full-time missionary couple in Pakistan. In answer to the Bishops' Appeal for Korea, this church gave the largest amount contributed by any church in the Methodist connection. Sunday school attendance has doubled in the past six years.

"But," Dr Walton added, "nothing, no program in all the 12 years I have been here, has met with such unanimous, enthusiastic, favorable response as the prayer group plan now under way."

Dr. Walton conceived the idea of the combined plan at the Little Rock Annual Conference in June when he heard Thomas A. Carruth, Field Secretary of the Prayer Life Movement. He also participated in a prayer vigil which was held during the Annual Conference session.

"The idea came to me at the time," Dr. Walton said, "to combine the evangelistic emphasis and Bible reading with the prayer groups which had been organized at First Church for some time."

Commission Sponsors Program

Dr. Walton presented the idea to the Commission on Membership and Evangelism which is sponsoring the program. Tom C. Trimble, Jr., chairman of the Commission, and John W. Lindsay, associate pastor at First Church—who is serving as advisor for the program—cooperated with Dr. Walton; and the plan was presented to the official board. There it underwent thorough examination and met unanimous approval.

So preparations began, and 200 handpicked leaders attended a dinner meeting at the church on September 27. Each leader was given a list of names, and each chose three people to complete a group. Groups will continue to be formed as the program grows until every one of the members of First Church has had an opportunity to participate.

Prayer Pledges

Each group is made up of four men, four women, or four young people. The group members agree to do three things throughout the year. *First,* each day, each member will pray for the other three by name, for the church, and her ministers and missionaries. *Second,* each one agrees to read from the Bible each day and, if possible, follow the reading suggestions supplied by the church. *Third,* the four agree to make every effort to win at least one new member for the church this Conference year, either by membership transfer or on profession of faith.

The Bible readings now being suggested by the church are being taken from the Gospel of Mark which also was the subject for the Bible course Dr. Walton conducted on family nights, beginning October 26. Dr. Walton pointed out that this is one of the many ways the prayer program helps to integrate the church program.

Year-Long Vigil

He also expects the program to be of assistance in preparing the people for the year-long prayer vigil to be conducted in Arkansas in 1956. The vigil will be launched at the First Methodist Church, December 31, at midnight. First Church will have a 36-hour continuous period of prayer to start the state-wide observance.

During the three-day period, when at least two people will be in prayer in the sanctuary at all times, the church will add to the emphasis with a prayer institute to be directed by Mr. Carruth.

"I sincerely believe we are being led by the Spirit in our prayer group program," Dr. Walton added, "and we expect spiritual benefits beyond the powers of evaluation to be derived by individual members and the church itself.

"For a minister to have 1,500 to 2,000 people praying for him by name every day has spiritual possibilities of which we know very little. For that number to be praying every day with sincerity and method cannot help but deeply strengthen the spiritual life of any church," Dr. Walton concluded.

YOUTH MARCH

Above, two young people make an evangelistic visit to bear their witness for Christ in the regional Christian Witness Week in Pittsburgh.

A SERIES of Regional Christian Witness Missions are marching across the map this year in the outthrust to reach new youth for Christ and the Church.

The series of three missions for youth and adult workers hit Pittsburgh the last week of September. The mission in Pittsburgh reached out to include 171 churches across the Conference as a part of their Witness Week in the local churches. One hundred twenty guest youth and adults from New England through Georgia attended. One thousand seven hundred forty visitors made 4,956 visits and recruited 2,439 new members for the Youth Fellowship and the Church in one of the largest youth-to-youth evangelistic missions to date. The week end of visiting was followed by a workshop conference with youth and adult workers from 32 Annual Conferences.

Co-directors for the mission were Ernie V. May, Pittsburgh District Superintendent, and Herbert Costolo, District Director of Youth Work.

Eugene E. Golay and Glenn Mingledorff were staff resource persons from the General Boards. These projects were sponsored by the Methodist Youth Fellowship in cooperation with the Conference and General Boards of Education and Evangelism.

A regional is scheduled for Evanston under the auspices of a Planning Committee representing the Rock River Conference and Evanston Mission. Churches throughout northern Illinois are scheduled to participate. Two hundred youth and adult leaders from the central states, from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, will be visiting in local

Below, no person is a prospect until he becomes a living responsibility for some individual who can witness to him for Christ.

CROSS THE MAP

churches and participating in the two-day workshop conference in First Methodist Church, Evanston.

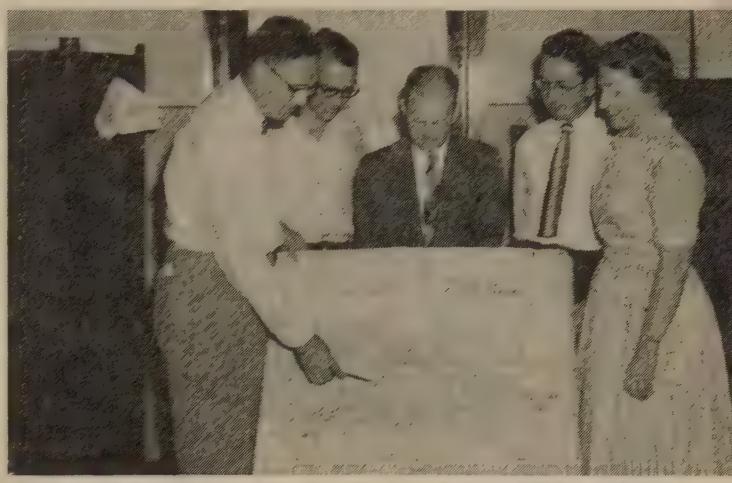
Merrill B. Powers, Joliet-Dixon District Superintendent, and Emerson Colaw, pastor of the Edison Park Methodist Church in Chicago, are Executive and Associate Directors of the Mission, which is a pilot mission for the Rock River Conference.

First step in the preparation was the summer mission in Danville. The Labor Day week end planning retreat for youth has given the youth running start on the mission scheduled in the local churches for February 10-12. Harold W. Ewing and Howard Ellis of the Youth Department Staffs are representing the General Boards in the Mission.

The Denver Regional, set for February 17-21, will bring youth and adults from the inter-mountain states and the west coast for the five-day mission and workshop. Glenn Mingledorff and Leroy Walker are representing the General Boards in this mission which, with the other three, serves the nation.

For information and application for registration, write Christian Witness Missions, Box 871, Nashville 2, Tennessee.

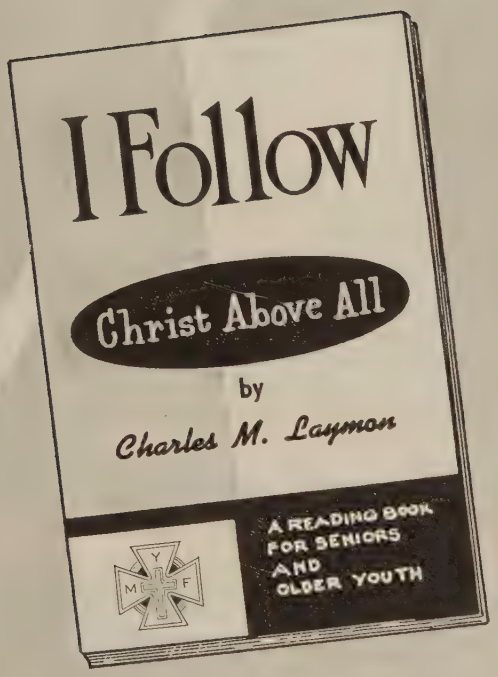
Young persons participating in a summer mission in Danville, Illinois, initiated the first step in the Chicago Area youth program. Among the participants were, left to right, seated, Janis Richmond, Freeport; Norma Smith, Mount Vernon; Jim Kastner, River Forrest; Mary Hamrick, Champaign. Standing are Dale Messerle, Kankakee, and Larry Burns, Elkville.



Above, adult leadership for the Danville Area Summer Mission included, left to right, Rev. Wayne Leighty, Chicago, director; Rev. Vernie Barnett, Mount Vernon; Rev. George Hunt, Danville, Associate St. Marks; Rev. C. Kenneth Powell, Indianapolis, guest leader; and Miss Marilyn Clark, Chicago, Rock River Conference Director of Youth Work.

Below, adults working with the youth at the Clinic are, left to right, front, Miss Clark; Rev. Howard Ellis, General Board of Evangelism; Rev. Harold Ewing, General Board of Education; Rev. I. Wayne Leighty, Executive Secretary, Conference Board of Education; Rev. O. Otto Steinhaus, Minister of Education, First Methodist Church, Evanston; Miss Marilyn Digweed, full-time youth director at Dixon. On the back row are Miss Dolores Watts, Educational Assistant at Centennial Methodist Church, Rockford; Mr. Bob Trost, boys' worker at Marcy Center; Rev. Merle Hall of Ashton, Joliet-Dixon District Director; Rev. James H. Hagerty of Morrison, sub-District counselor; and Rev. Robert Watts Thornburg of Mayfair Methodist Church, Northern District Director.

For personal reading and meditation
to help seniors and older youth
"Strengthen Faith"



The Lenten Reading Project
in the
Methodist Youth Emphasis
1956

Seniors, older youth, and interested adults will find the Lenten Project helpful:

1. **Through personal reading of the book.**
2. **Through meditation and prayer.**
3. **Through sharing ideas and experiences with others.**

A NEW BOOK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

in the 1956 Lenten Reading Project

- On the Life of Jesus
- By a Distinguished Bible Scholar
- Pocket-sized
- Clear, readable type
- For interested, adults, too

FOREWORD BY BISHOP JOHN WESLEY LORD

It is the purpose of the Youth Emphasis of The Methodist Church "to help all youth discover the will of God and live by it."

Three things are required to do this:

1. Strengthen the faith
2. Win Youth to Christ
3. Improve the MYF

The regular ongoing, week-by-week program of the MYF in every local church must seek to meet these great needs. The Lenten Reading Project is designed to accomplish this end. In 1956 this Project will help Methodist Youth and interested adults to know more about the life of Jesus.

I Follow—Christ Above All, by Charles M. Laymon, discusses Jesus' early life and home as He faced His life work, His ministry and teachings, the opposition He met, His last days, and His resurrection.

This book may be ordered from The Methodist Publishing House serving you. It will be available January 10, 1956.

Additional information may be obtained from the Youth Department of The Methodist Church, P. O. Box 871, Nashville 2, Tennessee.

WORLD WIDE

Church Attendance Movement

Central Methodist Church, Phoenix, Arizona

AGAIN in 1956 the General Board of Evangelism is stressing a great Church Attendance Movement that shall be world-wide in scope and all-inclusive in character. It is well that we should ask why church attendance should be promoted and what we hope to accomplish by a Movement.

The first evidence of vital life is growth. Regular church attendance creates in the Church a climate favorable to spiritual growth. Spiritual food is not usually taken in without continuous exposure to it. One of the supreme joys of a pastor is experienced in seeing both individuals and families grow and develop in the life of the spirit as they attend church with regularity.

Unquestionably, the habit of regular church attendance creates in the community a tide that is running with the interests of God. One could scarcely exaggerate in expressing the importance of this fact.

Testimony of Millions

That public worship fills a need in the average life is the testimony of millions of people the world around. In this frightened atomic age there is no need more evident than that of achieving a sense of belonging. The surest basis for achieving this is through meeting one's fellows in the presence of God and uniting with one's fellows in attempting to fulfill the will of God.

Granting, then, that regular church attendance is a thing to be desired, what can we expect to accomplish through another Movement for Church Attendance?

We first hope to lead the persons not now attending to pledge themselves to do so for the period from January 1 to Easter. It is hoped that, in fulfilling this pledge, they will form a habit of church attendance which will carry over and continue beyond the period of the pledge.

It is expected that persons, both young and old, who are not now related to the Church will begin the Christian life and will enjoy the satisfactions of regular church attendance.

Such a Movement has as its objective the training of the church members in Christian stewardship and tithing. It is a well-known fact that no crusade for tithing, and no extreme of diligence in promoting the every-member canvas, and no extreme of planning a budget can compare in effectiveness with thronging the sanctuary with worshipers. If the people attend and learn the joy of fellowship in God's House, they will contribute to His enterprises.

Another thing we hope to accomplish by means of another Movement in church attendance is the training of the people in the high and holy art of worship. No surer way has ever been discovered to grow in grace and into God-likeness than to participate regularly in worship and learn better and more satisfying methods of worship.

Worthy Attitudes

A further objective of the Church Attendance Movement is to lead all who attend to a daily practice of Christian living. No better soil for the germination of worthy attitudes and actions has yet been found than that provided by filled churches.

A Church Attendance Movement may well serve to lift up the importance of vital preaching and may serve materially to improve the quality of that preaching. It is a poor minister, indeed, who fails to respond to a sanctuary filled with expectant worshipers.

The Church Attendance Movement may well serve to strengthen and vitalize the organizations of the church. If people are led to form habits of regular church attendance, we will be remiss if we do not invite them to widen their

church contacts and experiences by participating in activities of the Men's Club, the Woman's Society of Christian Service, the Methodist Youth Fellowship, the choir, the Boy Scouts, or whatever organization serves their age or interests.

We thus see that the final objective of a Church Attendance Movement is to make America—the world—more Christian by reaching more individuals and pervading them with the influence of Christian worship.

Additional Values

There are many values in a Church Attendance Movement in addition to increased church loyalty and attendance.

1. Church school attendance increased.
2. Offerings enlarged for local church expenses and missions.
3. New prospects for church and church school membership discovered.
4. Inactive and indifferent members reclaimed.
5. The church and its program kept before the people for a protracted period.
6. New members brought into the church fellowship.
7. A new interest developed on the part of church members in those outside the church.
8. Much information provided for pastoral calls.
9. A spiritual revitalization of the church promoted.
10. The laymen given a sense of responsibility for the program of the church.

Here are some features that attract attendance:

1. Provide a nursery for small children during the worship services.
2. Have a church school session for kindergarten age children during the morning worship service.
3. Have special music by children and youth choirs.
4. Plan an outstanding program of music every Sunday.
5. Observe special Sundays and seasons during the year.
6. Give recognition to various groups and organizations in the church and community. Issue special invitations.
7. Give informal recognition to visitors during the worship services.
8. Have continuous program of publicity and promotion.
9. Arrange transportation for persons who could not otherwise attend.
10. Use special series of sermons with topics that get attention.
11. Use Radio and TV facilities.
12. Cultivate an atmosphere of warmth and friendliness in the church.
13. Erect signs on highways and at strategic spots, inviting attendance.
14. Choose a motto for the church, and live up to it.
15. Invite guests who live in hotels and motels.
16. Use the "Fill the Pew" Plan. Divide the sanctuary into sections. Assign the pews to active members. They are to be responsible for filling their pews each Sunday. This is specially effective for Sunday evening services, but many churches have used it for Sunday morning.

Bulletin Quotes for the

WORLD WIDE CHURCH ATTENDANCE MOVEMENT

The following reasons for attending church have been given by church members:

"I go to church because my soul needs spiritual food for living and because of my God-given responsibility to bring up my child in the way he should go."—*A Mother.*

"I go to church because I love the church. I love to come to worship God and for Christian fellowship."—*A Junior High School Boy.*

"I go to church because it brings me real happiness to worship in the church service and attend church school every Sunday. I seem to have an empty feeling all through the week if I miss this privilege."—*A Layman.*

"I go to church because I like to go. I think it is the thing I should do, and it makes me a better man."—*A Layman.*

"I go to church because I was reared to go to church. It is a part of my life the same as my food. No other organization can give you the spiritual uplift that the church gives."

"I go to church for spiritual guidance, for fellowship with Christian men and women, and to better prepare myself as a parent to bring up my child as a Christian."

"I like to go to church because it helps me to live a better life, because I know it pleases my Lord, and because I want to help build God's Kingdom here while I live on earth."

"We attend church because worshiping God is the greatest of our four freedoms. It brings us closer to Christ in our home, business, and social life."

"I go to church because it is my Father's house. Yes, I have my friends with me all week, but when His guest, I find a loving communion found nowhere else."

The church is the place in which God does His marvelous works, the theater of His justice, mercy, goodness, and truth, where He is to be sought, where He is to be found, and in which alone He is to be retained.—*Adam Clarke.*

For Increasing Congregations in the World Wide Church Attendance Movement

Use the

"Fill a Pew" Plan

THERE are few things more inspiring to a pastor and his congregation than a sanctuary filled with people. Well-attended worship services develop interest and enthusiasm for all phases of church activity and create the atmosphere for an effective church program. Therefore, any practical plan or technique that will increase attendance at regular Sunday or special worship services will lift the spiritual level of the whole church.

The experience of many churches has proved that the "Fill a Pew" Plan is one of the simplest and most effective techniques for increasing attendance and developing new interest in the work of the church.

How the Plan Works

The "Fill a Pew" Plan may be used to build attendance for Sunday morning worship services during a period of special emphasis. It is being worked with remarkable effectiveness for Sunday night preaching services. Some churches employ the plan on Sunday nights for several months each year during the fall and winter months. It may be used successfully in a special preaching mission or revival crusade. Tremendous increases in interest and attendance may be achieved.

The plan works on a very simple pattern. The sanctuary is divided into sections, and the pews in each section are numbered. Individuals are selected as "Pew Captains," are assigned specific pews, and are given the responsibility of filling these pews by inviting their friends and neighbors to attend the services. Special recognition may be given those who fill their pews each night. Major emphasis is placed on securing the attendance of church members.

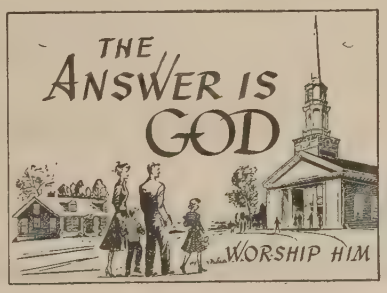
Either one or two persons may be assigned as Captain of each pew. Advantages of two Captains for each pew:

—Means more people working
—Provides larger nucleus
—Guarantees larger attendance, interest, etc.
—Assures someone active in case of illness, etc.

Values of the Plan

The "Fill a Pew" Plan will increase attendance when it is followed in churches of all types and sizes. This is perhaps its primary objective. However, there are many other values in the use of the plan, some of which may be even more important for the future of the church.

1. Attendance at the services is increased. Pastors report increases of 100 per cent to 500 per cent through using the plan.
2. Many laymen are used. It gives lay people a concerned interest in attendance at the services. It spreads service opportunities.
3. Responsibility for attendance is placed upon the entire church. It is not just the pastor's task.
4. Indifferent and unconcerned members are brought into a renewed relationship with the church.
5. New leadership is discovered and developed.
6. Opportunities are provided for multiplied personal contacts. Church members get acquainted with one another. Needs for pastoral care are discovered.



7. An atmosphere of warmth and friendliness is developed in the services. This gives new spirit to the singing and greater receptivity to the message.

Organization and Operation

The "Fill a Pew" Plan works, if it is "worked." It will not work by itself. It requires careful organization and follow-through. The Commission on Membership and Evangelism should initiate the plan, set up the organization, and follow through the operation. Here are some things it should do to put the plan into operation:

1. Present the plan to the Official Board for adoption.
2. Determine services and dates when the plan is to be used.
   —Special period of emphasis for Sunday morning
   —Sunday night services
   —Preaching mission or revival meeting
3. Select a special "Fill a Pew" Plan committee or assign responsibility to the church attendance committee. This committee should organize the plan and carry through the operation.
   a) Divide the sanctuary into sections and letter each section: "A," "B," etc.
   b) Number the pews in each section: "A-1," "B-4," etc. Type or print the numbers on small pieces of paper and fasten them to the ends of the pews with Scotch tape.
   c) Select the "Pew Captains."
      —Secure as many men as possible
      —Husband-wife teams may be used
      —Use young people
      —Specific organizations or groups may provide the Pew Captains, such as, Men's

Club, Woman's Society, Board of Stewards, Youth Fellowship
—Enlist those who have been indifferent members
—Try to use persons who have not been in places of leadership

d) Assign the pews.
—Pews may be assigned to individuals or teams
—Pew captains should not be asked to serve more than two or three nights in a week of services, nor more than four or five consecutive Sundays, then another group should take over
—Determine the number of Pew Captains needed
—Print names and assignments in the Church Bulletin
—Post a list of pew assignments in the church vestibule
—Give recognition to Pew Captains in each service

e) Arrange meetings for all Pew Captains. Explain the plan. Give each one a copy of "How to Organize and Operate the 'Fill a Pew' Plan."

f) Give special attention to contacting the church membership.

g) Where the plan operates over a period of several weeks, have occasional meetings of Pew Captains for reports and sharing.

4. Plan careful carry-through in order that the plan may not lose its momentum.

Suggestions for Pew Captains

The Pew Captains determine the success of the "Fill a Pew" Plan. Your enthusiastic participation will inspire the interest and attendance of others. Here is an opportunity to help lift the spiritual level of your church and bring new life to great numbers of the members. Through rendering this service in Christ's name you will discover new resources for your own Christian life. These "suggestions" are to help you do an effective job.

- Check to be sure of your assigned pew and the number of persons needed to fill it.
- Determine to do your best to fill your pew for every service.
- Start early to secure those who will sit in your pew. You may contact persons at the previous service.
- Make personal visits to friends and neighbors.

Promotional Materials for the 1956

CHURCH ATTENDANCE MOVEMENT

Only samples of the following materials are in the Church Attendance Packet. For quantities, order separately and get extra results.

Letterheads, 8½x11 inches, mimeograph paper — **75¢ per 100**
Letterhead says "World Wide Church Attendance Movement," and contains the "The Answer Is God" emblem, and another brief statement.

Printed Letters, 8½x11 inches — **$1.00 per 100**
On the above letterhead, an appropriate letter is printed, ready for signing and mailing to members and constituents. It announces the Church Attendance Movement and requests full cooperation.

Church Bulletins — **$1.00 per 100**
A printed bulletin, for use on the first Sunday or early in the Movement. Delivered flat, so that inside of bulletin may be mimeographed or printed locally with local church program announcements.

Bulletin Inserts (5 in set) — **5¢ per set**
Five different two-color (5½x8½) bulletin inserts, printed on both sides and ready for inserting in your regular bulletins. Designed to stimulate church attendance and individual and family devotions. Minimum order, 50 sets.

Personal Invitation Cards — **$1.00 per 100**
A card folder, containing the "The Answer Is God" emblem, and a personal invitation to attend church. Designed to be signed by an individual or church official and handed or mailed to persons.

"Fill a Pew Plan" leaflet — **10 or more, 3¢ each**
A practical plan for building up church attendance. Each pew captain will need a leaflet. Single copies, 5¢ each.

Hymnal Bands — **$1.00 per 100**
A band to go around front cover of hymnal, advertise the Movement, and furnish special Responsive Reading for it. Minimum order, 50.

Certificate of Loyalty — **$1.00 per 100**
To issue at the close of the Movement to those who have been especially faithful in attendance. Minimum order, 25.

Air Mail Your Order Today to

World Wide
Church Attendance Movement

1908 Grand Avenue — Nashville 5, Tennessee

- Use the telephone to enlist your guests.
- Arrange transportation for those who need it.
- Come to the service at least 20 minutes early to welcome and seat your guests.
- Introduce new people and strangers to others in your pew. Help to create the atmosphere of friendliness.
- Introduce new people and prospects for membership to the pastor.
- Inform the pastor of homes needing pastoral visits.
- Fill out Prospect Cards for persons who should be won to Christ and membership in the Church.
- Continue to invite people to attend the service.

Helpful Leaflets and Booklets

"I Will Uphold the Church" (10c each; 12 for $1.00)

"I Go to Church Sunday" ($1.50 per 100)

"Let's Go to Church" ($1.00 per 100)

"Why I Go to Church" ($2.00 per 100)

"The Lost Day" ($2.00 per 100)

"How to Organize and Conduct a Church Attendance Crusade" (10c each)

"How to Have a Preaching and Reaching Revival" (10c each)

(*This article is available from* TIDINGS *in booklet form at 5¢ each; 10 or more, 3¢ each.*)

World Wide Church Attendance Movement

Bring This Great Experience to Your Church in 1956

Church Attendance Packet

Each packet contains sufficient materials for the thorough promotion of a church attendance movement for a church of its size. Also each packet contains samples of many other items which you may secure later if you desire. So order the packet now.

Only 3¢ per Member

Although each of these packets contains 16 different items, in necessary quantities, the price of each packet is within the reach of every church—only 3¢ per member—and the extra attendance and loyalty generated will bring enough extra financial returns to more than pay for the packet. But don't order a packet for that reason. Order it for the good of your church and the glory of God.

	Church Membership	*Price*		*Church Membership*	*Price*		*Church Membership*	*Price*
No. 1	100	$ 3.00	No. 4½	450	13.50	No. 7½	750	22.50
No. 1½	150	4.50	No. 5	500	15.00	No. 8	800	24.00
No. 2	200	6.00	No. 5½	550	16.50	No. 8½	850	25.50
No. 2½	250	7.50	No. 6	600	18.00	No. 9	900	27.00
No. 3	300	9.00	No. 6½	650	19.50	No. 9½	950	28.50
No. 3½	350	10.50	No. 7	700	21.00	No. 10	1,000	30.00
No. 4	400	12.00						

The following materials are in the Church Attendance Packets in recommended quantities, but may be ordered separately

Local Church Booklet, 10¢ each; 6 for 50¢

Community Booklet (1 copy in packet) 10¢ each; 6 for 50¢

Instructions for Visitors (a few in each packet, for leaders of Instruction Conference) 5¢ each, 10 or more, 4¢ each

Visitor's Guidance Folder (1 for every visitor) 2¢ each

Friendly Visitor's Agreement cards (for enlisting the visitors) 50¢ per 100

Church Attendance Visitor's Assignment cards (for assigning the visitors to the homes they are to visit) 60¢ per 100

Church Attendance Graph (for making a visual graph of your Sunday-by-Sunday attendance) 15¢ each

Church Loyalty Assignment envelopes (for use by your visitors) 10¢ a dozen; 75¢ per 100.

Door Knob cards (for visitors to leave where people are not at home) 1¢ each; $1.00 per 100.

Church Members Loyalty Covenant cards (the basic card—for every member) 50¢ per 100

My Record of Attendance cards (for a member to keep record of his own attendance) 50¢ per 100

Posters, 17x22 inches (for church vestibules, bulletin boards, and elsewhere) 10¢ each; 6 for 50¢

Window Cards, 11x8½ (containing the emblem, "The Answer Is God") 5¢ each; 6 for 25¢; 100 or more, 3½¢ each

Sheets of Stamps (100 two-color stamps to sheet, containing the emblem) 20¢ per sheet; 6 sheets for $1.00

1-column **Newspaper Mats** (containing the emblem) 15¢ each

2-column **Newspaper Mats** (containing the emblem) 20¢ each

Pastor's Resource Book (containing helpful ideas that might be promoted to good effect. Invaluable) 25¢ each

Order from the

1908 Grand Avenue **World Wide Church Attendance Movement** **Nashville 5, Tennessee**

Church Enrichment Crusade

in Town and Country

by James E. Hankins
Conference Secretary Town and Country Work
Holston Conference

Churches like this benefit from the Church Enrichment Crusade.

THE Holston Rural Revival had been a marked success. More than 1,200 decisions had been recorded. The Town and Country Commission felt a great need for a follow-up of the harvest. The executive committee of the Commission agreed that such an effort should be in the nature of an enrichment of the spiritual life . . . an effort at increasing understanding of the Christian life, the Church, its organizations and functions. Accordingly, the chart, "Spiritual Life for Methodist Christians," became the central core of the effort. The ideas, suggestions, and details of the program were built around the chart.

The Town and Country Commission presented the plan to the Board of Evangelism for suggestions and approval. Later the idea was presented to the Inter-Board Council and was soon adopted by the Annual Conference.

What It Is

The Church Enrichment Crusade in Town and Country is five days of enrichment for the *whole* church; Sunday school, MYF, W.S.C.S., Adult Work, Evangelism, Education, Stewardship, and Missions. The Crusade is designed to

—increase understanding of church organization
—improve and enlarge training programs
—heighten missionary interest
—increase church school enrollment and church attendance
—understand where our money comes from—where it goes and why
—interpret function of and need for such organizations as W.S.C.S., MYF, Methodist Men.

It is five days so packed with preaching, evangelism, education, and study of organization that every church may emerge enlarged, ready and equipped to assume a larger responsibility in the local and world community.

What It Takes

A Pastor

Before any circuit or rural station can have an Enrichment Crusade the pastor must want it. He must have the desire for a more enlightened and challenged congregation. He must be willing to prepare his people through a week of prayer, visitation, and publicity prior to the beginning of the Crusade. An eagerness to enlist people in the effort is also necessary for success.

A Church

Another, and obvious, ingredient of the Enrichment

Visiting minister talks with a group of young people about organizing an MYF.

Visiting minister reads the Spiritual Life Chart before preaching.

Visiting minister discusses a Methodist Men's Club with interested members.

Visiting minister discusses possibilities of starting a Woman's Society in this church.

Crusade is a church . . . a church that will welcome a visiting preacher to conduct an intensive 5-day Crusade. The church should also agree with the purpose of the effort and seek to meet the simple requirements as outlined in the brochure. These include a willingness to prepare for the Crusade, to order a chart if one is not available, to attend and support the services.

A Visiting Preacher

A visiting preacher is also necessary for *each church* entering the program. His responsibilities will be pointed out a little later. Any minister who wishes to enrich his own experience through service to a small church can find a wonderful opportunity in the Enrichment Crusade.

What It Costs the Local Church

The Crusade requests that each local church provide travel expense, board and room for the visiting minister, and travel for the host minister. The number of offerings is left to the host pastor and churches; but at least one love offering, over and above expenses, should be equally divided beween host and guest ministers.

What Is the Schedule?

In order to permit station preachers to assist in the Crusade without missing any Sunday services in their own churches, the following schedule was developed. Assuming the Crusade begins on Monday night (Sunday through Thursday would work as effectively), the four sections of the Spiritual Life Chart would be given Monday through Thursday, with Friday evening left for a service of dedication. Using the building theme, each of the first four nights were named to fit in with the section of the chart to be given that evening. The outline follows:

Monday: The Plan
Section I—"Our Faith"
Tuesday: The Foundation
Section II—"Our Heritage"
Wednesday: The Tools
Section III—"Our Work"
Thursday: Everybody a Builder
Section IV—"Duties of a Methodist"
Friday: Dedication
Service of Consecration

If the Crusade is built around the Spiritual Life Chart, it is projected within a revival atmosphere. A two-hour period is set aside for each night except Friday. A typical schedule follows:

7:30-7:45 Hymn Sing
7:45-8:30 Enrichment Hour—the Chart
8:30-8:45 Buzz session in small groups
8:45-9:00 Questions and answers from whole group
9:00-9:30 Preaching and Altar Call

The visiting minister in each church will present the message from the chart and preach. It is hoped that laymen will lead the singing and assist in other parts of the service.

Preparation

At least one week of prayer is recommended prior to the Crusade. Some prayer meetings should be held in the church during this week and definite plans laid for morning, afternoon, or evening prayer meetings in the homes of each participating church community.

One of the most important tasks in preparation is to find the weakest areas in the program of the circuit churches. What are the needs? Where is the program or organization the weakest? Does each church have an organized MYF? If there are too few youth for this, could there be a circuit Methodist Youth Fellowship? Are the four Commissions really set up, or are they just on paper? What about the possibilities of a charge-wide Methodist Men's Club? Does the membership have a pretty good idea about where World Service and Conference Benevolences go? Does each church have a Woman's Society of Christian Service?

Circuit-wide publicity is necessary and will, of course, depend upon the host minister and whatever publicity committee he may have. There seems little wisdom in publicizing very far outside the bounds of the charge, but every member and prospective member should certainly be well-informed about the Crusade.

A member-to-member visitation is also recommended as one method of preparation. If members can see that here is a chance for them to do some talking, to enter into a different type of service, to get a little clearer idea about their church; if they are informed that these services are designed *for church members,* a greater challenge is presented than might be possible otherwise.

Supper Meetings

Once the preparation has been made, the visiting ministers invited, and the inventory of the circuit taken, some plans should be laid to meet the needs and to work toward strengthening some of the weak spots.

Supper meetings can be arranged either on a circuit or

local church basis. The visiting minister can be the guest speaker. Invitations should be given in the light of what the host minister wants to accomplish. For example, if he desires to organize a Methodist Men's Club on a circuit basis, men from over the entire charge should be invited. On the other hand, if the four commissions need to be set up in one of the churches, those invited to the supper should be from only the one church. There could easily be four or five local church supper meetings each evening . . . in homes, school houses, or the churches. In addition it is possible to have a circuit-wide supper meeting going on at the same time, depending upon the need. The visiting ministers should be informed before coming to the charge what is expected of them at the supper meetings.

Other Possible Meetings

There is no end to what can be accomplished during these five Crusade days. Planning and organizational meetings may be held in the afternoons with women's groups, or with youth groups. Prayer groups can certainly be held in the mornings or afternoons during the Crusade. Visitation evangelism can be used afternoons or evenings. If one visiting minister knows music, children and youth could be led in learning some new hymns.

Promotion

Promotion in the Holston Conference is in the hands of the District Superintendent and any committees he may choose. In some instances the promotional committee is composed of the District Superintendent, the District Secretary of Town and Country Work, and the District Secretary of Evangelism. The Crusade plan is rather flexible; and, for the most part, the promotional committee will determine the necessary adaptation and extra details.

There is only one piece of promotional literature. This is a five-color brochure listing the suggestions and details given in this article. It was designed for distribution especially to local church leaders, but it is readily useable for general distribution.

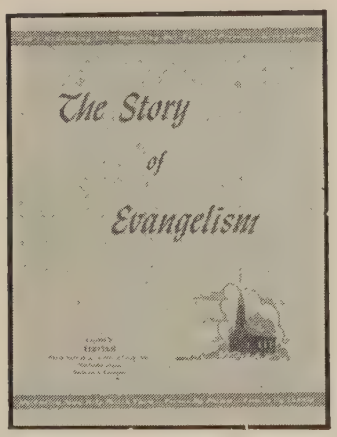
The Circuit Plans

It is recommended that the circuit pastor call together leaders from each of his churches to plan for the Crusade in each church. In this way four or five local church Crusades can be planned at one time. While the local pastor will have the responsibility for the over-all effort, his visiting ministers will assume local church responsibilities along with the laymen in each church.

One of the most important aims of the Enrichment Crusade is to reach the individual church. Some of our smallest congregation have some of the greatest needs.

Beamed at the rural church, flexible and easily adapted, the Enrichment Crusade, with proper preparation and promotion, can be a most enriching experience for circuit churches.

NEW! INFORMING! STIMULATING!



The Story of Evangelism

A graphic portrayal of the needs and opportunities of evangelism—person by person—family by family. Factual information for distribution to every member of every Commission on Membership and Evangelism.

Here is genuine motivation for significant evangelistic action!

32 pages—Two colors

Single copies---25c (mailed)

10 or more copies---20c each

Order from

TIDINGS, Headquarters for Evangelistic Materials,

1908 Grand Ave., Nashville 5, Tenn.

The Upper Room Fellowship

Editor's Note:

Users of THE UPPER ROOM long to share this devotional guide. Many have joined The Fellowship, sending THE UPPER ROOM to those who were unacquainted; to those in other countries who, because of exchange controls, could not subscribe; Braille issues to individuals and to homes for the blind where no funds are available. It has been rewarding to the donors as well as to the recipients. The ministry of Fellowship includes Personal, Chaplains, Braille, Other Languages, and Specials. Anyone may join The Upper Room Fellowship, by writing to Miss Mattie Lee Chatham, director, 1908 Grand Avenue, Nashville 5, Tennessee.

"I cannot express you enough my thankfulness for the little booklet—THE UPPER ROOM—you sent me. It is marvelous and full of blessing. I understand and read literature in five foreign languages, but I could not find so beautiful daily reading as in your UPPER ROOM."

This was from a letter written in 1950 from Josif Horak, Zagreb, Yugoslavia. Not only is he prohibited from sending any money from his country for such literature, but all packets must be sent to him by registered mail.

Since the day in 1950 when this layman, a lawyer who gives much service as a local preacher, became acquainted with THE UPPER ROOM by a gift from the Fellowship, he has contributed six meditations for issues from 1951 through 1955. Recently Rev. W. Sadler, of The Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, who is Secretary for Africa, Europe and the Near East, wrote J. Manning Potts, the editor of THE UPPER ROOM, expressing appreciation for the inspiration of the publication and for his particular pleasure in Mr. Horak's meditation in the September-October issue. At this time Mr. Horak is a supply in one of the Southern Baptist Churches in Zagreb. How THE UPPER ROOM reaches out interdenominationally, interracially and internationally!

Mr. Horak asked Miss Mattie Lee Chatham, director of The Fellowship, to help him find the words of a spiritual he had heard sung by some Jubilee Singers who were touring Yugoslavia. With the gracious help of Dr. Charles S. Johnson, president of Fisk University and Mr. John W. Work, director of music, she was able to comply, just as she is to many requests from members of The Fellowship the world over.

Mr. Horak is helped in preparing his sermons through a subscription to *The Upper Room Pulpit* and other devotional materials which he also receives through the Fellowship. He writes that he feels the power of the prayers of its members as he joins each day in this large Fellowship of Prayer.

Young Minister Depends Upon The Upper Room

Rev. Rufus A. Abernathy, Jr., of the Union Street Methodist Church in Westminster, Maryland, wrote to the editor of THE UPPER ROOM saying: "The Upper Room is a vital part of my ministry and most helpful in the establishing of family worship habits. I would recommend it to every Christian home in the world. What a witness! Soon Christianity would be spreading to more and more homes, and the world would be uniting under Christ."

There is no minister who does not yearn to be a better one. There is no ministry more rewarding to a pastor than establishing Family Worship in the homes of his people. The Upper Room Parish Plan is a most effective way to accomplish this. It is a program that will deepen the spiritual life of the whole church. Write for information to THE UPPER ROOM, 1908 Grand Avenue, Nashville, Tennessee.

POLICEMAN'S HIDDEN TREASURE FOUND

A "hidden" copy of THE UPPER ROOM in Peru, South America, caused Ray W. Chamberlain, a native of Missouri who is doing missionary work under the Pilgrim Holiness Church, to desire to share the following story:

"When evangelizing in Peru in 1954 three of us were holding an open air meeting. I had to speak through an interpreter, but while singing I was interupted by a policeman. Fear gripped my heart because the law was so 'fixed' that a Protestant could be arrested for such an 'offense' as preaching the true gospel of Jesus Christ.

"The interpreter was contacted, and we soon found out that the policeman was very, very quietly asking if we could sell him a Bible. We told him we would be glad to do so.

A Visit to the Police

"At the close of the service the policeman with his assistant took us to his office and in subdued tones he said, 'I have heard that the Bible is the greatest book in all the world, and though I have never seen one, I want to buy one.' The sale was quickly made, and the assistant bought one also.

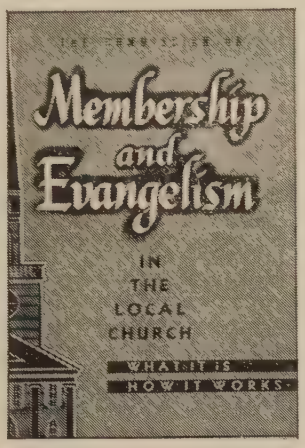
"Then he told us that he and his assistant had been arguing for days and he hoped we could settle the argument. He explained that he believed there was something inside us that troubled us when we did wrong. The assistant declared to the contrary.

"Then a wonderful thought flashed through the policeman's mind, and he quickly asked, 'Does the Bible state anything about such a feeling?' We promptly told him he was speaking of conscience, and with his own eyes he read the verses found by our missionary. Then he turned in glee and said to the assistant, 'That settles the argument, for the greatest book in all the world shows it is a fact.'

"The policeman then pulled out a little booklet which he had hidden quite thoroughly. He said, 'Is it all right to read this book?' We looked at it—a Spanish edition of THE UPPER ROOM. We told him it was safe and would help him much in his soul. Soon he was covering the copy along with his newly purchased Bible deep in a bottom drawer in his desk with paper and rags. We asked why! And then he explained what we knew but could hardly realize that if caught with such literature in his possession the Roman Catholic Church would soon see to it that he was jobless."

Every

METHODIST CHURCH



owes

this practical manual

THE COMMISSION ON MEMBERSHIP AND EVANGELISM in the Local Church

to every member of its Commission

Provides basic help in the basic work of the church

25¢ each

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TIDINGS

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Nashville 5, Tennessee

A Conversion Through Prayer

by William M. Hearn

Director

Methodist Public Relations

Louisville, Kentucky

AN unusual prayer experience has been reported by Island Methodist Church, near Owensboro, Kentucky. A young man was converted recently on shipboard thousands of miles away at almost the exact hour the people of Island Church were praying for him by name.

Prayer Request

At the end of a Wednesday prayer service in the church, a father asked for a special prayer for his son who had left the previous Friday to go overseas with the Air Force.

The people, including the boy's mother and sister, went to the altar and prayed for him. The mother and sister had been converted in a revival that closed the same day the lad had left. The father had been converted six months before.

Significant Letter

The first letter the family received from their son said in part:

> I could hardly wait to write and tell you. I have found the Lord, and I am about as happy here as I would be if I were home because I have Him!
>
> The first two days were miserable for me, and Wednesday night I went up on the deck of the ship. No one was there. I leaned against the rail; and something kept telling me, "Darrell, can't you just see your mother and father and June praying for you?"
>
> And right there is where I found Jesus! Because I could see you praying for me.
>
> I could go on and on and on and tell you how happy I am with Him, but I guess you feel the same. I don't feel half as far from home as a lot of the boys do. It is because Jesus is by my side.

So the strong, aggressive church at Island can add another to its list of conversions. More than 50 were converted during the one-week revival, which was led by the pastor, Carl T. Davis, Jr., and Fred R. Pfisterer, Owensboro.

Evangelism and Tithing

"The Island church goes in strong for evangelism and tithing," said Paul S. Powell, Owensboro, District Superintendent.

Deepen the Spiritual Life of All Your Members!

Develop Them in Effective Churchmanship by Using the Excellent

TURN OVER CHART

"Spiritual Life for Methodist Christians"

Prepared by

G. Ernest Thomas

PART I

The

METHODIST FAITH

"Above all, taking the shield of faith." — Ephesians 6:16

A miniature reproduction of a page from the Chart.

Provides information on the Methodist faith, the Methodist heritage, The Methodist Church at work, the duties of a Methodist Christian. 96 pages. 2 colors. Metal binder at top.

$12.00 each

Order from

TIDINGS

Headquarters for Evangelistic Materials

1908 Grand Avenue

Nashville 5, Tennessee

The Place of Prayer in the Cause of Peace

by

J. H. Cameron
Pastor, The Methodist Church
Collins, Mississippi

EVERY now and then I hear it said, "Why not be realistic and face the facts? Prayer and preaching are ineffective for world peace."

What could be more realistic than experience? And, it has been the experience of the great saints of all ages that prayer has the greatest force for transforming lives of anything in the world. The entire Christian religion is based on the fact that God can and does take men as they are and transforms them into what He wants them to be. Our men in the South Pacific during World War II received kindnesses at the hands of natives who had been won to the Christian way of life primarily by prayer.

Of course, much depends on how we think and what it is that we pray for. But, if we are sincere, somewhere in the process God's mind and our minds meet.

Pray for Others

When we pray for peace, it is not a question of changing God's mind or of exercising magical influence over the life of another. When we pray for peace, we pray for others. And, when we pray for others, we may not always change the circumstances, but we assuredly do change ourselves and, perhaps, those for whom we pray.

We open our own hearts to God. Often our attitudes will be changed. We will be more forgiving and will seek forgiveness of those whom we have wronged. When we really pray, we turn our lives over to God, to be used by Him, to have His will done in and through us.

I am sure that Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick is right when he said, "God has given to real prayer the power to shape the future for men and the world." For, how can we expect God to change us without changing our world? Or, how can He change our world without changing us?

I do not say that we can change the circumstances that exist in our world as a result of previous acts. But, who can say that the hearts and lives of the men who control the destiny of our world cannot, and will not, be changed by our prayers? As Maltbie Babcock has said, "Our prayers must mean something to us if they are to mean anything to God." Experience has many times verified and demonstrated the teaching of the scriptures that "the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

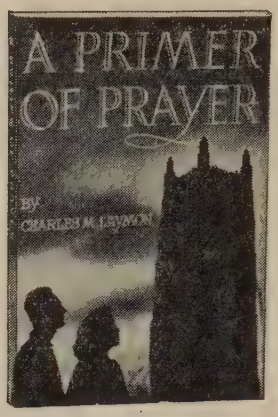
Intercession

William Law expressed it long ago in this manner: "Intercession is the best arbitrator of all differences, the best promoter of true friendship, the best cure and preservative against all unkind tempers, all haughty and angry passions." Is this the kind of prayer our friends would have us forsake and "scrap"? Not so. It is rather of this kind of prayer that the poet wrote:

More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friends?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

From my own experiences, as well as those of many others whom I have known, I cannot believe that anything lies beyond the reach of prayer except that which lies outside the will of God. And, I certainly do not believe that it is not the will of God that all his children shall live together in mutual respect and understanding, in peace and harmony.

Helpful Materials on Prayer



A Primer of Prayer

Charles M. Laymon

Designed for the "average layman," this book provides practical guidance and spiritual enrichment for these days.

50¢ each; 12 or more, 35¢ each

Some Secrets of Prayer

Ray W. Ragsdale

An illustrated leaflet containing helpful suggestions for making one's prayer life increasingly vital.

$2.00 per 100

See Order Blank

TIDINGS
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New Potential Is Discovered by the Commission on Evangelism

Paul W. Bloomquist

Embury Church, Freeport, Illinois, was not a stranger to THE UPPER ROOM, but it took our Commission on Membership and Evangelism to really discover its potential. Like so many other churches Embury had its "regular" order of 150 copies which were placed on a narthex table for those who knew its value and who month by month would take their personal copies and perhaps a few more to give to friends. In a sense THE UPPER ROOM was there for those who wanted it.

However when our church changed to a commission form of leadership our Commission on Membership took its assignment seriously and began to check up on its responsibilities and opportunities. It came to the page in the manual where it was suggested the Commission "assume the responsibility of ordering and distributing THE UPPER ROOM in every home in the membership." To begin with that looked like an over-sized job for a church with 1500 members and almost 800 homes. There was the cost factor to be considered, and the work of preparing the copies for mailing. A second look at the parish plan made our commission bold to consider it, and presently they recommended to the Official Board that we try it for a few months, mailing out two issues, and then attempt to evaluate its worth. We would watch the response our people would make to the invitation to share in the project, and then we would be alert to words of appreciation for its spiritual ministry.

Response Thrilling

The first issue was mailed without a parish plan envelope, the second with such an envelope, and our response was a thrilling one! The accompanying letter indicated that a small coin would be their vote of appreciation. But when a five dollar bill came along, and many other envelopes with bills, with notes saying how much THE UPPER ROOM meant to them, or with a word of how they hoped their gift might mean someone else would receive THE UPPER ROOM, we saw that here was a ministry in which many laymen felt they could significantly share.

The Upper Room Encircles Entire Embury Family

We are in our second year of this larger ministry now and our Board has planned for it as a continuing ministry of the church. THE UPPER ROOM has found its place in our Embury family! New members are given a copy the day they come into the church. A copy goes along with the wedding certificate to the new bride and groom, with THE UPPER ROOM opened to the wedding date and a brief inscription by the pastor. The students at college, the service men and the non-resident members are all included. THE UPPER ROOM is our most inclusive ministry.

It is also a layman's ministry. Members of the commission assist the church office in preparing copies for mailing. It is their project, a commission responsibility, born of their reading of the manual. In this day of "do it yourself" here is a project that has blest us no end.

Left, the pastor, Paul W. Bloomquist, reminds the congregation that *The Upper Room* is on the way to them once again and urges their regular use of it.

Extreme left, the Grobs have bedtime devotions for Steve and Judy. Mother Helen teaches in Junior High department and father Lyle is superintendent of Embury's Junior department. Lyle knows when it is *The Upper Room* time for then his mail pouch weighs heavier than usual as he delivers to the many Embury-ites on his route.

Below, center, Mary Sunderland, one of Embury's beloved, an invalid, finds daily comfort and strength in her *Upper Room*.

Below, left, Miss Iva Zaedow, church secretary, runs off her 800 envelopes on electric addressograph.

Below, right, Mrs. Harrison McDonald, center, secretary of the Commission on Membership, directs mailing; while Mrs. Don Laible, WSCS Student Secretary keeps an eye on college addresses. Mrs. George Horton, right, is the "service men's mother," and she keeps watch for service men's envelopes.

These Circuit Churches Advanced the Kingdom with

SAWDUST IN THEIR SHOES

by Garland Knott
Pastor, Iuka Circuit
Iuka, Mississippi

Miss Glenn was speaking. "I wish that next year we could get two or three of these churches together for a revival meeting under a tent or brush arbor for 10 days or two weeks, instead of having just a week in each one of them. We don't get started till it is time to quit."

A Major Idea

It was the end of the 1953 "revival season"—July and August—for the rural churches of the Iuka Circuit. Converts had been few. Of the nine churches on the charge, the five lying north of Iuka had received only six on profession of faith. In their area there were more than 100 prospects.

As pastor, I knew something needed to be done. But my thoughts went something like this: "I serve seven churches. Brother Ivy, the faithful retired minister who serves the other two, lives 30 miles away. How could we possibly organize such an effort in these little churches with their strong feeling for tradition?" Cora Lenn Glenn, our rural worker, might have a good idea; but it seemed unworkable.

Therefore, we followed the usual pattern in 1954—a week's meeting in each church. In those same five churches, only three professed faith in Christ.

When September came, Miss Glenn again expressed her idea. This time I was convinced.

The more I thought about the plan, the bigger it grew. Instead of bringing two or three churches together, why not all five of the ones north of town? They lay almost in a circle, and a tent could be placed at a central point.

By November, I was planning and praying in earnest. I asked God to guide me in finding the right preacher for such a meeting. Several friends in the Conference said that Thomas A. Carruth was the man. Mr. Carruth, a staff member of the General Board of Evangelism, works with the Prayer Life Movement.

I wrote Brother Carruth, detailing the possibilities. The first sentence of his reply was this: "Let us Pray." And we did! After an exchange of letters, we set a date for a meeting. The date we set was for July 10-29—not 10 days, not even two weeks, but three weeks!

Tent Purchased

Meanwhile I had contacted the Conference Board of Evangelism about the possibility of buying a tent. The members of the Board had the vision and faith to do just that. The 40x60 foot tent was completed in Memphis, Tennessee, on July 8 and hauled to Iuka that night.

Our preparations were made. The five churches were consulted, and all consented to try the concerted endeavor, though a good many members said secretly or openly, "Three weeks is a long time. I doubt that we can do it."

A few weeks before the meeting opened, a planning committee, representing all the churches, met to work out details. The Rev. J. R. Grisham, Executive Secretary of the Conference Board, met with us. We decided to ask the trustees of Central School to let us

Left, shown are most of the 35 persons who professed Christ in the Iuka Circuit Tent Meeting. Standing behind the group are (left to right) James Grisham, Conference Director of Evangelism; C. I. Ivy, Assistant Pastor; Thomas Carruth, Staff Member, General Board of Evangelism; Garland Knott, Pastor; and J. H. Holder, a former Pastor. Right, a portion of the crowd under one side of the tent at one of the meetings of the Iuka Circuit Five-church Revival. Many could not get seats inside, and therefore stood outside or sat in cars.

put the tent on the school ground, where there was plenty of parking space and where water and power were available. They readily consented.

Plans were made for entertainment of the preacher and any others who would like to visit. It was decided to run three busses to all the night services. Different laymen and women were given specific responsibilities.

Special Guests

Brother Grisham offered the suggestion that other churches in the vicinity be invited to attend on certain nights as special guests. The suggestion was adopted, and enthusiasm grew. The whole group agreed that all financial needs could be met by taking an offering at each night service.

On every hand prayers were answered. An outstanding preacher was coming. A tent was secured. A couple who were away at work offered the use of their furnished house to the visiting evangelist free of charge.

And there is the secret of the meeting. It began and continued in prayer. Prayer cards were given out. Prayer cells were formed. Lists of members and prospects were sent to praying churches across the nation and divided up among the people. On the four days before the meeting began, members of the churches held a continuous 96-hour prayer vigil. The meeting truly became a part of the Prayer Life Movement.

During the first week of the meeting, most of the sermons were designed to help people pray more effectively. The second week Brother Carruth began to "plow deep," as we say in the South, preaching on the great themes of sin, judgment, and salvation.

At the end of two weeks, only six persons had professed. But the people were really "under the burden." The spirit of fervent concern and prayer was almost tangible. Both before the morning service, which was at 11:00 o'clock, and almost all afternoon the ministers visited daily with unsaved persons. Four other ministers came and stayed overnight to help with visiting.

Significant Results

On Tuesday morning of the third week, the meeting broke loose. When the invitation was given, 14 came forward to accept Christ. When the last night came, 35 had professed! Thirty-three joined The Methodist Church, and two joined another denomination.

This is the main story. The reason for holding revival meetings is to help people become Christian, and that is what had happened.

But it is not the whole story. Words cannot really express the difference the meeting made. However, a few examples might help.

A 13-year-old girl led two of her friends to Christ even walking to the altar with them.

A prayer group was formed. It will continue in the years ahead to function as a generating force for evangelistic effort.

Almost three times as much money was raised in this one meeting as in all five of the one-week meetings last year. It cannot be overemphasized that the greater part of it was spent on promotion and transportation—actually getting people there.

Several times from 500 to 600 persons were present at night services, though a total of not more than 300 could have been expected in individual meetings. The morning crowds increased almost daily, with 173 attending the last morning service on Friday. Visitors came from as far as 250 miles away just to attend some of the services.

The people were drawn together by the cooperative effort and the actual labor—manual, mental, and spiritual—involved. There is a greater spirit of Christian unity and love than ever before.

Jubilant Reaction

I could go on for hours, telling of the special music, dinner on the ground, love feast, and so on and on. But perhaps the feeling of everyone involved could be summed up in the statement one lady made to me the last night: "I think this is the greatest thing that has happened to us in a long time. I have received personally a wonderful blessing from every service. One of the best things is that we have shown this whole area that The Methodist Church can really *do* something. We will never be the same again."

To me this is enough to vindicate Miss Glenn's idea. The same sort of plan might well bring the same kind of results in similar situations elsewhere.

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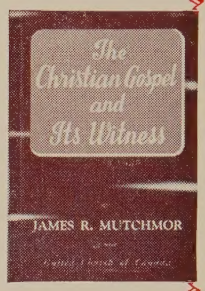

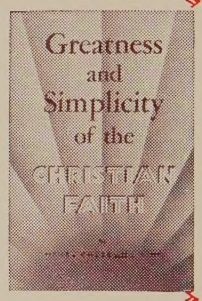

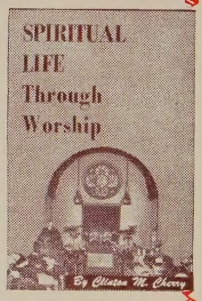

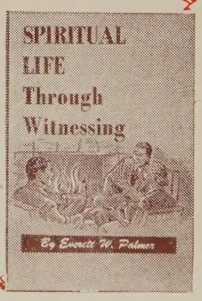

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